BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

G. SUBRAMANIA IYER

S. A. GOVINDARAJAN

PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

G. Subramania Iyer, founder of *The Hindu* and *The Swadesamitran,* has been described as "the greatest Indian journalist of his generation" and "the maker of modern Madras." He shone also as an educationist and social reformer seeking to practise the ideals that he enunciated.

This short biography written by a former senior member of the editorial staff of *The Hindu* is intended as an introduction to the life of an eminent Indian.

G. SUBRAMANIA IYER

ABOUT THE SERIES

The object of the Series is the publication of biographies of those eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our national renaissance and the struggle for independence.

It is essential for the present and coming generations to know something about these great men and women. It is a matter of regret that, except in a few cases, no authoritative biographies are available. The Series has been planned to remove this lacuna. It is proposed to publish handy volumes containing simple and short biographies of our eminent leaders written by competent persons who know their subject well. The books in the Series will be of between 200 to 300 pages and are not intended either to be comprehensive studies or to replace more elaborate biographies.

Though desirable, it may not be possible to publish the biographies in a chronological order. The work of writing these lives has to be entrusted to persons who are well equipped to do so and, therefore, for practical reasons, it is possible that there might be no historical sequence observed. It is hoped, however, that within a short period all eminent national personalities will figure in this Series.

Mr. R. R. Diwakar is the General Editor of the Series.

A list of works already published and those which are in the press can be seen on the last page.

(Statue)

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MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

PREFACE

I felt honoured when I was invited to write the life of G. Subramania Iyer in the series "Builders of Modern India". He was the founder and first Editor of *The Hindu* for which I was privileged to work over a long period. Subramania Iyer was also the founder and first Editor of the *Swadesamitran,* now known as the *Mitran,* and his services to Tamil journalism were no less important than his pioneering work as Editor of *The Hindu.* He was a many-sided personality : he shone as teacher, educationist, economist, politician and social reformer seeking to practise the ideals that he professed. Those who have built upon the foundations that he helped to lay should cherish his memory.

In bringing out this biography I have had the goodwill and help of many friends, all of whom it is not possible to name here. The Editors of *The Hindu* and the *Swadesamitran* readily responded to my requests for permission to consult their files; and the Editor of *The Hindu* gave me photographs for use in this book. Mr. S. R. Venkataraman of the Servants of India Society, Madras, made available to me whatever information he had. And so did Mr. R. A. Padmanabhan, well-known journalist, and Mr. V. K. Narasimhan, formerly my colleague and now Resident Editor of *The Indian Express,* Bombay.

In the actual designing and writing of this book I am greatly in debt to Mr. Varanasi Rama Murthy, Chief Sub-Editor, *The Deccan Chronicle;* to Mr. V. Subramanian, grandson of G. Subramania Iyer and now member of the staff of *The Hindu;* and to my wife, Dr.

Alamelu Govindarajan. For helping to prepare the manuscript for the press, I must thank Mr. P. Balasubramanian of *The Hindu* and Mr. Murlidhar Potdar of Osmania University, Hyderabad.

I have consulted the standard works on the history of the national movement like Annie Besant's *How India wrought for Freedom* and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's *History of the Indian National Congress.* I found very useful and interesting Mr. Bipin Chandra's *Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India—Economic Policies of Indian National Leadership* 1880-1905. Mr. J. Natarajan's *History of Indian Journalism,* published as part of the Indian Press Commission's Report, will repay study by those interested in the early days of the Indian Press. I have consulted also Mr. S. Natarajan's *History of the Press in India* and Mr. S. P. Thiaga Rajan's *History of Indian Journalism.*

Mr. K. Subba Rao's *Revived Memories* gives us many glimpses of G. Subramania Iyer at work as Editor of *The Hindu.* Two small books published during Subramania Iyer's life-time I found quite useful : (1) *G. Subramania Iyer* by C. Hayavadana Rao (Ganesh and Co.), and (2) *Shri G. Subramania Iyer* in Tamil by Gurumalai Sundaram Pillai.

It would be rash on my part to claim that my book has done justice to all that Subramania Iyer achieved or attempted to achieve. Before a full and definitive biography could be written, more light is needed on certain episodes. No doubt he spoke in public and wrote a great deal but we could do with more information of a personal nature. Though he lived not so long ago, the ranks of persons who lived and moved with him have got thinner and thinner. I do hope, however, that this book

will stimulate public interest in the life and example of a great Indian and that somebody, more qualified and more fortunate, will soon take up the work of writing a comprehensive life of Subramania Iyer.

S. A. GOVINDARAJAN

Hyderabad
January, 1968

CHAPTER 1

PERIOD OF FERMENT

The last quarter of the nineteenth century was a period of ferment in India when the country attempted to discard the remaining vestiges of its mediaeval trappings. A new class of gentry comprising the graduates of the Universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras took over the reigns of leadership from the feudal landed aristocracy which had become suspect in the eyes of the British after the Great Uprising of 1857. G. Subramania Iyer, the subject of this study, belonged to this intellectual aristocracy with a pronounced middle class background.

The British, both the official and non-official elements among them, encouraged these products of Western learning as a counterpoise to the feudal classes. But these young men from the universities soon realised the gulf that existed between the foreign rulers' professions and practices. On paper, Indians were honoured citizens of the Empire, but in actual practice they were reduced to the status of second class citizens in their own country. The educated classes found that, despite their qualifications, they were discriminated against in the matter of appointments to higher ranks in the administration; and the Royal Proclamations issued from time to time, throwing open all offices in the land to men of merit, were observed more in the breach. This spirit of discontent among the educated classes was the origin of a concerted political movement in the country which culminated in the founding of the Indian National Congress.

There was not much of political agitation during the period. It was, rather, an era of petitions and resolu-

tions. Leaders fondly hoped that the British would set things right and do justice by India once they came to know the actual conditions obtaining here. The Indian Telegraph Union was established by Alan Octavian Hume, the founder of the Congress, to keep England informed of developments in India by wire. India was not without friends among British politicians. There were members of Parliament like John Bright and Charles Bradlaugh who took an abiding interest in her affairs. Gladstone, who rose to be Prime Minister of England, was among those who wished India well.

The Congress, which held its annual sessions regularly from 1885, was the great clearing house for popular grievances. It used to pass resolutions about various acts of omission and commission of the Government. It is interesting to note that Hume had no intention of making it a political body. He wanted the Congress to confine itself to social questions. Ironically enough, it was Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, who wanted the Congress to deal with political issues instead of leaving them to provincial associations like the Indian Association of Calcutta, the Presidency Association of Bombay and the Mahajan Sabha of Madras. The Viceroy envisaged for the Congress the role of the Queen's Opposition in England. But Hume had other ideas in founding the Congress; he meant it as a safety valve to prevent unscrupulous elements from cashing in on popular grievances and leading to another holocaust like that of 1857.

In the beginning, the Congress was patronised by the British, and members of the organisation reciprocated by considering British rule to be a dispensation of Providence. But as its demands grew in volume and intensity, the British liking for it began to cool off and officials who used to attend earlier sessions of the Congress were

ordered to keep away. The authorities tried their best to prevent the holding of the fourth Congress at Allahabad in 1888. Not only did they fail, but to their chagrin, a Briton, George Yue, presided over the session.

The first Congress, which met at Bombay in 1885, demanded the appointment of a Royal Commission, with proper representation for Indians, to look into the conditions of Indian Administration. The resolution was moved by Subramania Iyer. The Congress also urged the scrapping of the India Council. It was pointed out that the Council consisted of retired Anglo-Indian officials who had a stake in the maintenance of the *status quo.* They were, therefore, not competent to advise the Secretary of State for India. Subramania Iyer has gone on record as saying that an appeal from the Government of India to the Secretary of State in Council was just like an appeal from "Philip drunk to Philip drunk". The Government was requested to hold simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service both in England and in India and to raise the age limit for candidates from 19 to 23. The age limit was deliberately lowered to increase the handicap of Indian aspirants to the service. The Congress also sought the abolition of the Arms Act which prohibited people from having arms even for self-protection. It also called for the setting up of military colleges for training Indians for the officer cadres. Pleas for reduction in military expenditure, greater representation for Indians in Legislative Councils and separation of the Judiciary from the Executive became hardy annuals with the Congress.

From the nature of the demands put forth, it becomes clear that all the Congress sought was greater opportunities for Indians; it did not want the British to quit India. In fact successive Congress adopted resolutions

protesting loyalty to the Crown. In the initial stages, the organisation had for its members people drawn mostly from educated professional classes like publicists, teachers, lawyers, doctors and businessmen. At one stage a working knowledge of English was sought to be made a condition for membership of the Congress. It acquired its mass base and agitational character in subsequent years.

A strong movement for social progress preceded the demand for political emancipation. Bengal was the home of this movement and it can be traced to the inspiring leadership of Raja Rammohan Roy who passed away in 1833. Some of the ideals of Rammohan Roy were realised during the enlightened regime of Lord William Bentinck. Rammohan opposed evils like *Sati* (immolation of widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands) and child marriage and resolutely set his face against the prevailing opposition to widow remarriage. He realised that there was no salvation for India unless she benefited from Western learning. In his reforming crusade he had to surmount great obstacles. Some Englishmen realised that the introduction of English learning with its advances in science and technology would lead to the ultimate elimination of British political influence. On the other hand there were the orthodox elements within India itself who argued that every thing worth knowing was in the Vedas and that Indians had nothing to learn from the West. In the end, Raja Rammohan Roy triumphed; the founding of the three universities in 1858 was not a little due to his pioneering efforts.

The Brahmo Samaj which he founded was a socio-political organisation and by its very nature was heterodox in character. It leaned heavily on Western empi-

ricism and frowned upon many a time-honoured practice. It aimed at a sort of a universal church which cared little for the ceremonial side of religion and brushed aside caste distinctions. The movement suffered a setback after the death of Rammohan Roy. It, however, received a fresh lease of life in the person of Keshab Chandra Sen. Under his stewardship, it became very popular with the educated Bengali youngmen as the ideals of the movement were in tune with what they were taught in the colleges. One of the achievements of Keshab Chandra Sen was the passing of the Civil Marriages Act[1] which enabled marriages to be solemnised without the aid of priests. Keshab Chandra visited England and the Brahmo Samaj's missionaries carried its message to different parts of India.

The Brahmo Samaj struck a responsive chord in the heart of progressive elements in other parts of India. In Poona, the Prarthana Samaj propagated its ideals; one of the distinguished leaders of Western India, M. G. Ranade, was the moving spirit of the Samaj. In Bombay, the noted Parsi publicist, B. M. Malbari, lent his powerful pen to propagate social reform.

In Madras Presidency, Kandukuri Veeresalingam was a pioneer in the social reform movement. He used to help young widows by finding suitable matches for them. He also opposed child marriage. Subramania Iyer threw open the columns of *The Hindu,* and later of the *Swadesamitran,* to the propagation of these ideals. He also assisted one of his associates in starting a weekly, *The Indian Social Reformer,* which soon became a mouthpiece of the movement in the Presidency. Subramania Iyer set a practical example in social reform by giving his daughter in marriage a second time after she lost her first husband.

These progressive social ideals did not win unanimous approval: these were persons who aimed at goals wholly or partly different. One movement which gained a sizable following was the Arya Samaj which gave freedom to its followers in the matter of social reform while at the same time stressed the infallibility of the Vedas. The Arya Samaj was started by Dayanand Saraswati and proved to be very popular in Western and Northern India. Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott founded the Theosophical Society. Theosophists believe that India is the repository of ancient wisdom and that the Vedas and Purans contain a great deal of esoteric knowledge. This movement helped a great deal in assuaging the ruffled feelings of Hindus and restoring their self-esteem. Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda also preached their gospel of love and social service at about the same time.

The economic condition of the people left much to be desired. An Indian leader of the period said that Englishmen considered India to be their happy hunting ground. Every year a good deal of wealth was carried away to England. There were very few industries in India. The British used to treat the country as a profitable source for the supply of raw materials which they used to get cheaply. The finished products, which they re-exported, used to fetch a good price. It is interesting to note that the victory of the British in Bengal in 1757 more or less synchronised with the advent of the Industrial Revolution in England and the clever British traders were not backward in exploiting the new source of raw materials for keeping their industries going.

The cottage industries which had been the backbone of the Indian economy fell on evil days after the 1857 Revolt as the patrons of the craftsmen, the members of

the erstwhile nobility were themselves ruined. Even the once famous textile industry in India was tied to the coat-tails of Lancashire industry.

Then there were invidious laws like the forest laws which prohibited the peasants from using the product of the forest. The already impoverished country had to pay heavily for the British Army which was stationed in India. Indians were not even allowed freely to join the volunteer corps. Only a handful of them were admitted. A British soldier used to cost Rs. 255 a year in England. The cost of maintaining him once he crossed the seas to India rose to Rs. 775 a year.

The period under review was the winter of India's discontent and Lord Dufferin only sounded the tocsin for the British Empire in India by advising Congress to interest itself in political activities. An attempt had been made in 1857 to wrest freedom from the British by force of arms and the feudal classes who spear-headed the movement had been ruined. A new class of leaders had emerged who fought the British with their wits; publicists like Subramania Iyer wielded their pens in defence of justice and fair-play for the natives of the country. Dadabhai Naoroji's election to the House of Commons in 1892 clearly proved that Indians could acquit themselves well anywhere, given the opportunity. It proved a shot in the arm for India in her struggle for political emancipation.

Chapter 2

EARLY LIFE : STUDENT AND TEACHER

G. Subramania Iyer was born on the 19th of January, 1855, at Tiruvaiyar in Tanjore district of Madras State now called Tamil Nadu. Tiruvaiyar lies on the banks of the Cauveri and is one of the sacred places in South India. His father, Ganapathi Iyer, belonged to the middle class; he was a *vakil* (advocate) and was well regarded by the Munsiff (judge), before whom he argued his cases, by his clients and by his friends. He was typically religious and conformist and this evidently made an impression on young Subramania's mind. In later years, Subramania Iyer chose to try and reform Hindu society from within the fold rather than change his religion as some friends advised him to do.

Subramania Iyer, who was one of a family of seven sons and a daughter, had his early schooling in the Tiruvaiyar Taluk School. Later he joined the S.P.G. Mission School in Tanjore and passed the Matriculation examination of Madras University in 1869; two years later, he passed the First Arts Examination from the S.P.G. College. This college, which was later known as St. Peter's College, is now only a high school but it has rendered great service to the cause of education in Tanjore. Subramania Iyer had the good fortune to study under the well-known educators, Marsh and Creighton and Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar. All the three were persons of high intellectual and moral calibre. We may note in passing that Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar was the elder brother of S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who followed in Subramania Iyer's footsteps to become Editor of *The Hindu*.

Subramania Iyer was unfortunate to lose his father when he was just a lad of thirteen. His mother, Dharmambal, looked after the family carefully and helped it to recover from financial troubles. Happily married to Meenakshi, he did not hesitate to go over to Madras in 1874 in order to join the Normal School (the Teachers' College of today) to be trained as a teacher. He did well and made a good impression on his Headmaster, George Bickle, who also served as an Inspector of Schools and later as Registrar of Madras University. After his training, Subramania Iyer became a teacher in the Church of Scotland Mission Institution in 1875 on a salary of Rs. 45 a month. He worked there till 1877 when he joined the staff of Pachaiyappa's College. It was while he was working as a teacher in this college that he appeared for the B.A. degree examination as a private candidate and passed. The fact that the post of the Headmaster of the Anglo-Vernacular School (the present Hindu High School, Triplicane) was offered to him before he was 25, is proof of his ability and the esteem in which he was held.

Subramania Iyer liked teaching and he wanted nobody to be denied education. The passion for social reform which he was to reveal later in life was already influencing his thoughts and feelings. His broad-mindedness rejected all ideas of communal or caste preferences; he was keen on extending free education to the needy and the deserving. He was instrumental in establishing the Aryan High School also in Triplicane in 1888. He admitted non-caste Hindus and Muslims alike in this school. He also arranged to run a free night school for those who could not attend classes during the day. That he was also deeply concerned for the moral well-being of the young may be seen from the following appeal that he

published in *The Hindu* of November 25, 1892:

"A library and reading room is attached to the Aryan High School, Triplicane. It is made use of by the pupils and teachers of that institution. The founding and endowment of a library is reckoned among the most enlightened forms of charity in modern times; and the manager confidently appeals to the generous instincts of wealthy noblemen and gentlemen to contribute to the enlargement of the library either in books or in money. The postage on parcels of books sent will be borne by the manager.

"The institution on whose behalf this appeal is made has been in existence for the last five years. In addition to the usual course of study gone through in High Schools in this Presidency, in the Aryan High school is imparted moral and religious education on a non-sectarian basis. Physical education is provided for by a gymnasium containing the necessary apparatus and plant. The school has been recognised by the Madras Educational Department. A large proportion of the pupils are taught free or on half-fee. Every aid rendered to the school will be help rendered to the furthering of education among the many who can least afford to pay for it. Books and donations, etc., will be thankfully received by G. Subramania Iyer, Manager, The Aryan High School, Triplicane, Madras."

Earlier, at a function held on May 18, 1891, to bid farewell to a member of the staff, Subramania Iyer said he had been a teacher for about fifteen years. Although he had seemingly taken to another vocation, he said, he continued to take great interest in education work because as a journalist it was his duty to watch the growth of knowledge and intelligence among his countrymen.

He handed over the Aryan High School to Christian

missionaries, making sure they would run it on the broad principles he had himself put into practice. It is now known as the Kellett High School. Thus two premier educational institutions in Triplicane will for ever bear testimony to Subramania Iyer's work as an educationist.

While teaching at Pachaiyappa's College, Subramania Iyer came to know M. Veeraraghavachariar, who was studying in the B.A. class, and this acquaintance soon developed into deep friendship. Together they started *The Hindu*.

CHAPTER 3

FOUNDING OF "THE HINDU"

September 20 marks an important anniversary in the calendar of the Indian Press. It was on September 20, 1878, that *The Hindu* first saw the light of day from the Srinidhi Press at Mint Street in Madras city. It was founded as a weekly by six enthusiastic youngmen, members of the Triplicane Literary Society. They were G. Subramania Iyer, M. Veeraraghavachariar, T. T. Ranga Chariar, P. V. Ranga Chariar, D. Keshava Rau Pant and N. Subba Rau Pantulu. These young men considered the paper as a missionary effort rather than a profit-earning enterprise. They wanted to organise public opinion on the important issues facing the country. The editorial that appeared in the first issue is reproduced in full at the end of this book* and bears the impress of Subramania Iyer's thinking and style. He and Veeraraghavachariar had soon to shoulder the entire burden of conducting the paper; he was the Editor while Veeraraghavachariar looked after the management.

The sheer courage of the young men who started the paper calls for admiration. They had very little capital and little experience of running a newspaper. Madras had seen two promising papers rise and fall: the *Crescent*, which was founded as the organ of the Native Association; and the *Native Public Opinion*, which was subsequently merged with the *Madrasee*. The last-named, found by A. Ramachandra Iyer, who later became Chief Justice of Mysore, sought like the others to foster the interests of the Indian people and protect

*Appendix II

them against the assaults of foreign interests. After some time it passed into other hands and its political complexion changed.

In a report published in the Silver Jubilee edition of *The Hindu,* Veeraraghavachariar wrote :

"All of us were fresh from College and had, therefore, no capital to speak of. Two of us, Mr. Subramania Iyre and myself, had entered life as school masters; and three others were studying for the Law to qualify themselves for the Bar and could, therefore, hardly find time to render the undertaking any material help. The brunt of the work fell upon Mr. Subramania Iyer and myself, and it was, therefore, not possible for us to start anything more than a weekly paper.

"Oh ! I well remember the various letters of encouragement and congratulation that came from all parts of India. I should, however, not omit to mention the discouraging remarks of some of our well-wishers who foresaw many evil consequences from the enterprise; they considered that the profession of a journalist was hazardous in the extreme, and that in the then condition of the Presidency could not financially pay its way. The fate of the *Native Public Opinion* and the *Madrasee* was predicted for *The Hindu*...But nothing daunted, we continued to work on.

"Mr. Subramania Iyer was, from its very inception, till he severed his connection with *The Hindu,* the editor of the newspaper, and he conducted it with an amount of zeal and enthusiasm hardly surpassed. And he was assisted in this work by Messrs. C. Karunakara Menon, K. Subba Rao and K. Nataraja Iyer, whose whole-hearted devotion was indeed praiseworthy. His high talents and great ability and his intimate knowledge of political and economic problems were in no small measure responsible

for the correction of many abuses in the administration and the creation of a sense of public duty amongst our countrymen."

In fact, Editor Subramania Iyer, as he was popularly known, moulded public opinion in South India for two decades through the columns of *The Hindu.* Years later, he was induced to give a graphic account of the obstacles he and his associates had to overcome in the initial stages of *The Hindu.* He said :

"When I came to Madras in January 1874 to pursue my studies, there was in Triplicane an association called the Literary Society. I and some others joined it and used it as a forum to write and read essays. Some of the members are now highly placed; some are no more.

"There was then a German, Dr. Gustav Oppert, who was a Sanskrit scholar, and I wrote feature articles about him in *The Mail.* When these were published I felt I had acquired the ability to write for the press.

"Before this, the *Madrasee,* the Indian journal published in Madras, had ceased publication due to various causes. When (Sir) T. Muthuswami Iyer was appointed Judge of the High Court, some Anglo-Indian papers commented unfavourably and in unflattering terms. Unable to stand this unfairness, six of us joined together and started *The Hindu.* When we started the newspaper we had no idea of the responsibility which its publication would involve, of how to conduct it, of the expenditure to be incurred, etc. Since we had no money with us we borrowed one rupee and three-quarters and printed and published 80 copies. We wrote that the appointment of (Sir) T. Muthuswami Iyer was right and we condemned the editorials that had appeared in the Anglo-Indian press.

"Next week Mr. R. Ramachandra Iyer, who had con-

ducted the *Madrasee,* called me and gave me encouragement. Handing over to me a list of those who had agreed to subscribe for the *Madrasee,* he asked me to go ahead and print 500 copies. By publishing such news items as the Seethapathi Naidu petition, the riot in Salem, etc., and by strongly criticising the improper action of Governor Grant Duff, we secured the sympathy and support of the public. Many of those who had volunteered to help at the outset, later went into Government service and could not offer much help; the responsibility of writing for *The Hindu* became solely mine."

Right from its inception, *The Hindu* performed a dual function; it educated the public on the political, social and economic problems of the day and kept the Government informed of popular aspirations. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the paper thought for the people and gave shape to the nebulous ideas of leaders who were willing to strike but reluctant to wound the foreign rulers.

The launching of *The Hindu* in Madras, which was considered a "safe Presidency by the British, with the object of exposing the shortcomings of the administration and voicing demands like greater representation for Indians in the services, etc., was a bold venture. Resources mattered then as now for the running of newspapers. Only a few Anglo-Indian dailies which had official patronage and the backing of the English business community were going concerns in those days. *The Hindu,* by its very nature, could not have aspired to either. Its only asset was the goodwill of its readers and not all of them were ready to part with money, even to pay the subscription. I have seen a letter dated September 11, 1885, written in Subramania Iyer's own hand addressed to Her Highness Surnomoyee Devi, the Maha-

rani of Cossimbazar, acknowledging receipt of her partial subscription. The letter which is reproduced in Appendix I gives us an idea of the difficulties that *The Hindu* faced in its early years. But Subramania Iyer as the Editor and Veeraraghavachariar as Manager in charge of its finances proved an ideal combination and, with the help and goodwill of discerning friends, managed to carry on.

In his *History of Indian Journalism,* prepared for the Indian Press Commission, Mr. J. Natarajan says that after the first month, the printing of *The Hindu* was transferred to the Scottish Press. The Madras Native Association was revived under the presidentship of Sir Bashyam Iyengar and the Association, Mr. Natarajan adds, shared common objects with *The Hindu,* namely, to represent the conditions and grievances of the people to the Government in order to secure their redress and to win recognition of the claims of the sons of the soil to a proper share in the administration. Subramania Iyer toured the Presidency to enlist support for the paper for which, in 1883, Raghunath Rao established a press called The Hindu Press, at Mylapore. Indeed, the later took an active interest in the paper and contributed to its columns. In the same year, on October 1, 1883, to be precise, the paper was converted into a tri-weekly and published from the better-equipped Empress of India Press. It had been found that the publication of the paper once a week came in the way of timely discussion on matters of current interest. *The Hindu* was foremost in defending Lord Ripon's reform measures against attempts to discredit them and to convey the real feelings of the people of India to the people of England. It also kept a careful watch on Governor Grant Duff's reactionary administration in Madras. In December of that year, *The Hindu* also moved to 100, Mount Road, after money

had been borrowed to help equip the National Press which was fitted up there to publish the paper. As part of the plan for educating the people, the *People's Magazine* was published from the same press from the next year onwards; it promoted detailed discussion on topics of the day to which *The Hindu* could not give adequate attention. Ananda Charlu edited the magazine and it was supported by P. Muniswamy Chetti. The office of *The Hindu* functioned as the headquarters of the Mahajana Sabha which had by then taken the place of the Native Association. The first Madras Provincial Conference was organised under the Sabha's auspices in December, 1885. This brought A.O. Hume, who helped to found the Indian National Congress, into close touch with *The Hindu* and its conductors. S. Subramania Iyer (afterwards known as Sir S. Subramania Iyer, Judge of the Madras High Court, later a friend of and fellow-worker with Annie Besant in the Home Rule for India movement) who had headed the Madras delegation to the first session of the Indian National Congress, took an abiding interest in the paper. Veeraraghavachariar acknowledged later that the National Press was "one of his numerous benefactions" to *The Hindu.*

The Hindu was in the very centre of the political stage in Madras when the Indian National Congress held its third session in the city (in 1887), Badruddin Tyabji presiding, and its press was fully used to publicise Congress activities. The hunger for news and views had grown steadily among the educated classes, thanks mainly to the paper, and its publication thrice a week was found inadequate to meet the demand. *The Hindu* was converted into a daily on New Year's Day in 1889 but Veeraraghavachariar has written that "though many of the subscribers to our tri-weekly gladly consented to pay

the additional subscription, still there was considerable diminution in the number of subscribers, and we had for a long time to conduct the paper irrespective of finnancial considerations". And the tri-weekly edition continued to come out for many years after, mainly for the *mofussil* readers.

For a long time, indeed, *The Hindu* had to depend on the generosity of a few friends like the Maharaja of Vizianagaram (Sri Ananda Gajapathi Raj) who supplied it with funds to keep it going. It was due chiefly to him that the rented premises at 100, Mount Road, Madras, were acquired by *The Hindu* and added to. The paper continued to be published there till 1940 when it moved into its own new premises, the Kasturi Buildings, further to the north on Mount Road. Here we may leave it while we take closer look at Subramania Iyer's stewardship of *The Hindu.*

CHAPTER 4

EDITING "THE HINDU"

Amrita Bazar Patrika and *The Bengalee* in Calcutta, and the *Kesari* (in Marathi) and *The Maharatta* (in English) founded by Tilak in 1881 and 1882 respectively, were among the more notable contemporaries of *The Hindu*. These formed the vanguard of the nationalist press and officialdom increasingly frowned on them. *The Hindu* preceded the Indian National Congress by seven years and the Congress found in the paper a ready and willing organ to propagate its ideals. The liaison with the premier nationalist organisation continued to the chagrin of the British rulers. The paper, therefore, had to encounter hostility from the administration during the Governorship of Sir M. E. Grant Duff. The office of the paper was often referred to as "the den of conspirators" because, directly and through the Mahajana Sabha which was housed in its premises, it brought together and sustained a band of workers dedicated to the public weal.

Undeterred by obstacles, G. Subramania Iyer set about the task of improving the paper with remarkable zeal. He made *The Hindu* an instrument for national resurgence and assailed anybody who came in the way of the country's advancement, irrespective of rank, caste, creed or nationality. A staunch believer in the corrective role of the Press, the Editor wanted officials and public men who were censured by the paper to profit by such criticism. There was nothing mean or personal about it. Retiring British officials often used to see a sort of a balance-sheet of their work in the paper on the

eve of their departure. The Editor never grudged praise where it was due even though the official concerned might have been previously castigated for some act of omission or commission.

The Hindu never took an anti-British line as a matter of policy. A Ripon had no greater friend than the paper while a Lytton or a Grant Duff was bitterly criticised for his haughtiness or exaggerated notions about "the white man's burden". The paper applauded Lord Ripon's resolution on local self-government and the Editor undertook a tour of the Presidency to educate the people on their responsibilities under the new scheme. The Viceroy had such a high opinion about the paper that he used to say : "Take *The Hindu* and see what it says", whenever he wanted to ascertain public opinion on any important measure.

The Hindu's editorial at the time of Dadabhai Naoroji's election to the House of Commons gives us an insight into its attitude towards the English rulers. It welcomed the election as "a singular monument to the splendid elasticity of the British Constitution, the generous instincts of the Englishmen and of the liberal sentiments, unparalleled in the history of any other imperial nation, which animate Britain's rule of this country. Such a thing is possible only in England...... The tie that binds India to her ruling country is no longer the mere sentiment of loyalty, ever so genuine and profound, but is the real constitutional equality attested by the actual presence of an Indian member in the Imperial Council". The Editor waged a crusade for the furtherance of that "constitutional equality" and took up cudgels whenever "the liberal sentiments" which "animated the British rule of India" were violated by the English officials here.

That Subramania Iyer did not flinch from castigating

even the mighty provincial governors when they did something deserving of censure, is amply proved by the Chingleput affair. The way that affair and the Salem incidents were handled by Governor Grant Duff proved his ineptness as an administrator. Chingleput was then a comparatively backward district and the ryots there used to somehow eke out their livelihood, suffering the caprices of the monsoon. Because of their general poverty, they used to default in the payment of *kist*. Absentee-landlordism and rack-renting aggravated their difficulties. They complained that Tahsildar Seethapathi Naidu adopted coercive methods to collect *kist* so that he could be in the good books of his superiors, especially the District Collector, Price.

The trouble began long before Grant Duff took over as Governor of Madras when the property of some ryots belonging to a village in the Conjeevaram taluk was attached in May, 1881. The ryots alleged that they were being harassed because they had refused to pay a bribe to the Tahsildar. They sought redress from the District authorities but failed; then they petitioned the Madras Government. An enquiry was ordered and over two hundred ryots were summoned to appear before the enquiry. The Tahsildar was cleared but the ryots expressed doubts about the impartiality of the enquiry. A deputation waited on Grant Duff and represented the grievances of the ryots. Instead of giving them relief, he allowed officials to wreak vengeance on the ryots who had levelled charges against the Tahsildar. A village munshi who had dared to present an adverse report about the Tahsildar was dismissed from service and was sentenced to 18 month's rigorous imprisonment for alleged false evidence.

The Hindu squarely blamed the Governor for the

whole episode. The Editor, along with five other prominent citizens of Madras, launched a relief fund to help the Chingleput ryots. The Chingleput affair ended only when the Tahsildar himself was convicted (in August, 1882) on a charge of stealing some incriminating official documents.

P. Kesava Pillai, the well-known publicist, after pointing out how nemesis overtook the Tahsildar, summed up :

"This is a typical case of the official scandals then prevalent in the districts exposed by *The Hindu.* The people have to be thankful to *The Hindu* for the fact that the number of European and Indian officials who shamelessly exact supplies from their subordinates in the villages is fast decreasing. For *The Hindu* published stories of supply scandals without flinching, whether they affected Europeans, Brahmins or non-Brahmins."

The refusal of some Muslims in Salem, in spite of repeated court rulings, to allow Hindus to take out procession in front of a mosque led to some incidents which the fertile imagination of the Grant Duff administration magnified into a seditious revolt. The rioting lasted three days. Special police was quartered in Salem; a Special Magistrate, Lewis McIver, and a Special Sessions Judge, Wigram, from Malabar, were sent to try innumerable persons arrested on trumped-up charges. A majority of them, including Dr. Manickam Pillai, respected Christian citizen and medical officer, were sent to the Andamans after being sentenced for life. A feature of the whole affair was the issue of blank warrants. A large number of people deserted their homes to escape arrest.

The High Court confirmed the sentences passed in a majority of cases. Three pleaders, including C. Vijayaraghavachariar and an official removed from service for

not warning the Collector of the "coming revolt", had to work two years in Madras to expose the falsity of the charges. It may be mentioned that C. Vijayaraghavachariar was himself convicted but he succeded in establishing his innocence. He also secured the conviction of people who had furnished false evidence. The British sense of justice was vindicated somewhat when Parker, the judge from Coimbatore, sentenced for perjury many of those who had helped to fabricate false evidence against Vijayaraghavachariar and other local leaders.

Vijayaraghavachariar acknowledged handsomely that the service rendered by *The Hindu* to the cause of justice "fearlessly and with facts and figures was phenomenal". The Editor, G. Subramania Iyer, appointed P. Kesava Pillai as special reporter to cover the Salem incidents. *The Hindu* carried on a vigorous campaign for the release of the victims. The Madras Government yielded only when Lord Ripon threatened to expose the Salem scandal in London. A memorandum was presented to him by Vijayaraghavachariar and Ramaswami Mudaliar when he visited Madras.

To crown all this, the paper also reported that District Magistrate Maclean had left Salem, while the riots were going on, to witness the Bangalore races. The news, published in the form of a letter, also charged him with claiming travelling allowance although he had camped at Hosur. As Kesava Pillai recalled late, *The Hindu* was not prosecuted for libel and Grant Duff and his Cabinet maintained the silence of the grave!

The paper was a terror to those Indians, no less than to the Englishmen, who fell short of its expectations. The Editor did not spare even the dead. Once a section of the readers took exception to Subramania Iyer's practice in presenting the shortcomings in a man's

career in the obituary notes. When his attention was drawn to it, he replied : "I place the highest value on our national progress. Nothing is dearer to me than the bright future of India. This is our highest and most cherished ideal. All personal considerations are insignificant. I want to impress on my countrymen, high and low, that whenever a man's career or conduct runs counter to national interests, he can expect no mercy from us, however high he may be. When a man dies we can review his work fully. We cannot take his name subsequently. The dead do not care what we write. Let the living take a lesson from our policy. Let both young and old, who like to leave a good name behind them, never forget their sacred obligation to the motherland. Let all feel that even when they die, their defects—if they injure the national cause and national self-respect—will not be forgiven. Let those who desire to stand well in the opinion of their countrymen after their death remember their duty to India. Self-seeking tendencies and belittling public interests have to be fully exposed. It is with great regret that I am writing these obituary notices. But I cannot help it. The feelings of the near and dear ones are as nothing to me when compared with the permanent injury to the national interest which some of our men have permanently and consciously done, either for their own advancement or for fear of wounding the delicate and divine susceptibilities of the members of Government."

The Hindu acquired an all-India reputation within a few years of its inception. Even people living in Princely States like Baroda, Mysore, Travancore, Hyderabad and Kashmir used to make known their aspirations through its columns. In a way, the paper brought them into the mainstream of national life on the intel-

lectual plane like its Calcutta contemporary, *Amrita Bazar Patrika.* It had distinguished well-wishers in leaders like Ranade, Tilak, Pherozeshah Mehta, W. C. Bonnerjee, Surendranath Banerjea, Alan Octavian Hume, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, Dadabhai Naoroji and Gokhale, to mention only a few. Hume used to buy copies of *The Hindu* for free distribution to members of the British Parliament. He once wrote to Subramania Iyer saying that his articles would do credit even to *The Times* of London.

The Hindu had a staunch friend in Surgeon-Major Nicholson who, on seeing the first issue, came seeking the Editor. According to Veeraraghavachariar, Nicholson gave valuable advice to himself and to Subramania Iyer on how to conduct the paper. He also contributed articles on current affairs.

The paper consistently reflected the views of the Editor. Subramania Iyer entertained radical views on social reform which were not liked by the orthodox sections of the people. At the time of the Age of Consent Bill controversy, the Editor wanted the Government to go ahead with the measure, ignoring orthodox opinion. His argument was that when far-reaching social reforms had to be undertaken, the State should brush aside opposition which was at variance with such measures. This was a departure from his earlier stand when he had opposed the State's interference in the field of social reform. His partner, Veeraraghavachariar, did not quite like the use of the paper for propagating these advanced views on social questions. It was one of the causes for the friction that developed between the two. The Manager probably felt that the circulation of the paper would be affected as a majority of the people were not ready for progressive social legislation.

Like all the nationlist papers of the day, *The Hindu* was very much exercised over the economic plight of the country. Subramania Iyer suggested Indianisation of the administration, as far as possible, to effect economy. In an editorial, the paper exhorted Indians to draw less salary than the "hired British officers". The paper also opposed projects like the Railways which only benefited the British to exploit further the raw materials available in this country. It also opposed any regulation of the working hours of textile labour as that would affect the infant textile industry. It saw in the move the hand of Lancashire magnates who wanted to eliminate their Indian rivals. However, when demands were made for bettering the lot of plantation workers, the paper supported them whole-heartedly as tea and coffee plantations were owned by Englishmen.

The Hindu did not confine itself to editorial discussions of serious topics. For the benefit of its readers, it threw sidelights on important developments in its new columns. An incident involving Bal Gangadhar Tilak is worth recalling. The Social Reform Party which was then under the control of Gokhale announced a meeting at a private residence to elect delegates to Social Conference which was holding along with the Poona Session of the Indian National Congress in 1896. Tilak got wind of the proposed meeting and went to the venue long before the appointed time, along with his followers and occupied all the available seats. When Gokhale and his friends arrived later they found they had no place even to sit. *The Hindu's* correspondent at Poona wired to the paper, saying that Tilak had enlisted the aid of his Law Tutorial College students for packing the meeting and getting his people elected as delegates, even excluding the conveners. The despatch had a most unexpected

result. Tilak served a notice of defamation on *The Hindu*. He had, however, no intention of pursuing it to the end. He only wanted to draw the Editor's attention to the fact that some elements in the Social Reform Party were discrediting "legitimate means of making majorities". More than the report, the heading—"Disgraceful Squabble at Poona"—must have irked Tilak.

But this episode did not prevent *The Hindu* from criticising the Bombay Government for imprisoning Tilak in 1897. It deplored the action of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in refusing to admit Tilak's appeal against the sentence. The paper declared, "The Privy Council's decision will not alter the universal belief that an innocent man, a loyal and high-spirited citizen, who had done useful service to the Government and to the country, has been sacrificed to the clamour of certain blood-thirsty Anglo-Indians...... Even apart from justice to Mr. Tilak, it was hoped that the appeal would elicit an authoritative definition on the law of sedition. But that hope having now disappeared, the expressed opinions of eminent jurists and administrators have been superseded by the pronouncement of a young and inexperienced judge under circumstances which in public estimation must detract a good deal from its weight and authority." This bold editorial in defence of one of the tallest leaders of the country caused jubilation in nationalist circles. The "young and inexperienced" Judge whom it castigated was Justice Strachey of the Bombay High Court.

It was one of the numerous occasions on which the paper crossed swords with the authorities. When the popular District Collector of Madurai, Crole, was suspended on trumped-up charges, Subramania Iyer sent an assistant of his to cover the enquiry which was conducted

in camera. The reporter kept the readers informed of the day-to-day proceedings, to the annoyance of the authorities. In the end Crole had to be exonerated from the charges framed against him and it was mainly due to the public opinion the paper created in favour of the Collector.

As working Editor Subramania Iyer considered himself the chief among equals. Even though a man of few words, he always used to encourage his juniors to give of their best. Karunakara Menon, who became the Editor after Subramania Iyer left the paper in 1898, says that one of the first things the Editor did on his return from England in 1897 was to congratulate him on the way he had conducted the paper during his absence. Menon had tried to tone down the paper's criticisms of the orthodox section of the population on social reform questions and the Editor followed the same policy after resuming duty.

K. Subba Rao, the special reporter who had covered the Crole case, once published an obituary note about a prominent nationalist Anglo-Indian leader. Next day the "deceased" came out with a contradiction; on enquiry it was found that the error had been committed because a friend of the paper had given the news to Subba Rao who published it in good faith in the absence of the Editor. Both Karunakara Menon and Subba Rao testify to Subramania Iyer's quality of readily forgiving such lapses on the part of his juniors. His willingness to see the other man's point of view endeared him to those who worked under him. S. P. Thiagarajan writes in his history of the Press that he met and spoke to Subramania Iyer almost in the evening of his life. He records that the great Editor was ready and willing to acknowledge that his colleagues on *The Hindu* had

been worth their weight in gold.

Subramania Iyer trained many a young journalist. C. Y. Chintamani and K. Natarajan, who later became prominent as Editors of *The Leader* and *The Indian Social Reformer,* respectively, had their lessons in journalism from him. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru refers to Subramania Iyer as the person indirectly responsible for promoting journalism in U.P. through his disciple, Chintamani. Writing in *The Leader* on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of *The Hindu,* Chintamani gladly affirmed that Subramania Iyer belonged to the category of giants of the Fourth Estate like B. M. Malabari, Kristo Das Pal and Tilak.

Although, as Editor of *The Hindu,* he had to battle almost daily against heavy odds. Subramania Iyer had immense faith in the ultimate triumph of daily newspapers conducted by Indians and in their ability to hold their own against their more powerful Anglo-Indian rivals. He dwelt on the future of journalism in the country while addressing the Madras Shorthand Writers' Association in 1897. He thought that the Indian papers would overtake the affluent Anglo-Indian journals in course of time because Indian journalists, unlike their foreign colleagues, could feel the pulse of the nation. He likened papers run by Indians to opposition parties in a democracy. He also pointed out to his audience that to an Anglo-Indian journalist, working on a paper was a sort of trade, whereas to his Indian counterpart it was something more earnest, something touching the interests of the country. "Journalism in India", he declared, "is a means of public good. An honest Indian journalist is as good a benefactor as a capable schoolmaster and indeed a supplement of the schoolmaster. The schoolmaster takes care of young men, but the journalist attends

to grown up men of intelligence and experience and he completes what is left undone in the schools."

Subramania Iyer put his precepts into practice in *The Hindu* and the other journals for which he worked.

We may end this chapter devoted to Subramania Iyer's stewardship of *The Hindu* with two stories. Mr. S. Natarajan in his book, *The History of the Press in India*, relates that Subramania Iyer, finding Chintamani coming late to work, discovered that he had no watch. He gave him one but the price was deducted from the salary for the month! No doubt, if the paper had been prosperous, the watch would have been an outright gift.

Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu, in the course of his tribute to *The Hindu* on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee, said that the bureaucracy's never failing attentions apart, the paper had to strive hard to pay for itself. He recalls that as Subramania Iyer was emerging from a public meeting after addressing it on the half-starved condition of Government servants and their innumerable grievances, an issue of *The Hindu* of the day was placed in his hands. In the Local News column, the Editor saw a note announcing the grievance of *The Hindu* staff in not being paid its salary for the two months past. But, Dr. Varadarajulu says, "Mr. Subramania Iyer perceptibly was more ashamed than piqued. He hastened home only to find the necessary money forthwith and had the staff paid the day following."

CHAPTER 5

TRIBUNE OF THE PEOPLE

To G. Subramania Iyer belongs the credit of putting South India on the political map of the country. Before his advent there was very little political activity in the Madras Presidency and it was found difficult to get a sizable audience even in Madras city to listen to a prominent leader speaking on an important subject.

The Hindu created a sense of nationalism in the South and it was further strengthened by the Madras Mahajana Sabha which was founded by Subramania Iyer in 1884. As has already been mentioned, politics in those days was a tame affair. Leaders of public opinion were content with presenting memorials and petitions to the authorities and in this the Mahajana Sabha had its full share.

But Subramania Iyer was a politician with a difference. He was not interested in merely getting patronage from the British. He resented the British practice of doling out concessions to the educated classes here. What he demanded was equal opportunities for his countrymen so that they could play a useful role in the affairs of India. He once said to a colleague : "God, in His infinite mercy and wisdom, has left unimpaired, after ages of suffering and servitude, our intellect. Bring to India the best of the representatives of the West, from England, America or Germany. Give the Indians the same training, the same facilities and the same opportunity. The Indian will invariably hold his own in this worldwide competition; even today, as an administrator, as a judge, as a lawyer, as a jurist, as a mechanic, as an

engineer, as a financier, as a soldier, as a diplomat, as a preacher, in every conceivable direction there is no walk of life—not one—in which the Indian will fail provided you give him equal opportunities. This is the only weapon we have at present for our national progress." It was this spirit of supreme self-confidence in the capacity of his countrymen that buoyed up Subramania Iyer in his fight against British injustice. He was a noted publicist before he entered politics and in a way his political career was complementary to his role as a journalist.

But he was always ready to admit the great good the British did for the country, like maintaining law and order after putting down turbulent elements, securing the country against foreign aggression, providing an excellent education system through the medium of English which served as a window on the outside world, etc. He did not want the British to quit the country. He used to say often that such a step would result in the balkanisation of the country. What he wanted was a greater share for Indians in the administration of the country and in law-making. He was no mere demagogue. He wanted his countrymen to equip themselves by studying well and by taking the fullest advantage of the facilities which were made available, however grudgingly, by the foreign rulers. He held up before his countrymen the example of Japan, which was making rapid strides at the time, as an instance of an ancient country adapting itself to changed times. He was against Indians mixing freely with the British on the social plane because the foreigners "are very strong in qualities in which we are very weak. Their intense love of their own country, their passionate pride in their own achievements and greatness..... would suffice to cause dismay in us; generally the weaker, when he becomes a comrade of the stronger, sinks into

insignificance." In this his attitude was similar to that of the leaders of the Irish Sinn Fein movement who exhorted their followers to keep away from the British socially for identical reasons.

Subramania Iyer cared more for the future of the country and was against people making too much of India's past. He cited the past only when it helped in the present struggle. He wrote and spoke approvingly of India's famous textile industry which was ruined by the competition from Lancashire. He wanted self-government and the Parliamentary system for India and did not gloat over the ancient system of *panchayats* which prevailed in India at a time when Britain was inhabited by a few savages. He used to say that the Western nations could progress because their present was glorious compared to their past, whereas in the case of India the reverse was true. Another feature of Indian tradition which he disliked was the over-emphasis on the other world leading to the neglect of the things that should be done to improve the conditions of living here and now. All this shows that he was a pragmatic politician who hated a rigid and doctrinaire approach to the questions that confronted India.

Subramania Iyer took an active part in the Congress movement from its inception. He missed few Congress sessions. At the tenth Congress which met in Madras in 1894, he spoke on Indian finance and stressed the need for an inquiry into it. He also protested against the curtailment of the liberty of the Press in Indian States. During the Calcutta Congress in 1896, he dealt with the subject of simultaneous examinations and the question of settlement of land revenue. At the Amraoti Congress the following year, he assailed the Frontier policy. He reverted to it at the fourteenth session of the Congress

which was held at Madras in 1898. He characterised it as "mischievous and dangerous....a policy promoted by the spirit of aggression abroad and repression at home". He also spoke on the currency question and pointed out how "Government looks only to exchange, Anglo-Indian merchants only to trade; none consider the people. Taxes are levied in silver and the ryot will have to sell 60 per cent of his produce to gain the inflated value of the rupee."

The sixteenth Congress held at Lahore in 1900 found him demanding an enquiry into the recurring famines. He also referred to the exclusion of Indians from the public services. At the Calcutta session in the following year he spoke on the miserable plight of the ryot. He pleaded for industrial independence and made practical suggestions for the establishment of technical institutions, foreign scholarships and a survey of indigenous industry.

At the Ahmedabad Congress of 1902, he once again spoke on the poverty of the people and pointed out that "there was a time when the population of India was so flourishing that foreign visitors envied it and when arts and industries flourished. The East India Company had deliberately sacrificed India to the commercial advantage of England, had discouraged industries and encouraged agriculture so that India might produce raw materials for the manufacturing industries of England; that policy had destroyed Indian industries; and the Government, which has inherited it, should reverse it. What is being done? The gold mines of Kolar are being worked by European capital. They yield rupees 20 crore worth of gold annually which is taken to another country. When, in another 20 or 30 years, all the gold is dug up and carried away, what will remain to the people of Mysore but stones? Government ought to protect Indian wealth,

not allow it to be carried away."

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the historian of the Congress, called him one of the most fearless and farsighted politicians of his time who deserved the gratitude of posterity.

Subramania Iyer once said of the Congress: "If the Congress had done nothing else for which it has won a permanent place in the modern history of India, it has done so for having enabled the Indian people to discover their great men and cherish them as their most precious possession. It has taught the Indian people the greatest of any lessons that a people can learn, the lesson of self-respect. It has besides succeeded in imparting to our rulers an idea of the full moral and intellectual capacity of our race whom they no longer recognise as a multitude of semi-civilized incoherent atoms, but whom they must respect and conciliate. The Indian National Congress, finally, is the one living emblem and proof of the unity of India, and the hope and guarantee of her future."

He wanted all sections of population to take an active part in politics and thus strengthen the Congress movement. The Madras Government was alarmed by the popularity of the Congress with the teaching profession. The Government amended the grants-in-aid code, prohibiting managers and teachers of aided schools and colleges from participating either directly or indirectly in any political movement and agitation without the previous sanction of the Director of Public Instruction. Subramania Iyer warned the Government at a meeting held in Madras against the new code. He pointed out that the teachers were the best intermediaries between the Government and the people and that if they were prevented from taking part in politics, undesirable elements would step in. The meeting opposed the new

code and resolved to memorialise the Government against the change.

Subramania Iyer also expressed the fear that it might become the thin end of the wedge and the Government might bring under the ban other classes of people who received financial aid from it. He realised the pivotal role students could play in national reconstruction. He wanted them to utilise their leisure in doing something which would benefit the community. He wanted the older generation to set an example which could be followed by the students.

In an article written in 1914, he commended the "Students' Brotherhood" of Bombay, a voluntary organisation which did good work in that Presidency and deplored the absence of such a body in the Madras Presidency. He was all praise for Bengal students for the help they rendered in times of natural calamities like floods, etc., and for the active part they took in the Swadeshi Movement of 1905.

"A good deal of useful material," he wrote "goes to waste wing to absence of organisation among our students, who spend their leisure time, whenever it is not occupied in reading, in idle talk or demoralising games. However devoted a student may be to his studies, or to his sports, yet he can spare some time in the week to devote to the service of his neighbours and it cannot be said that this devotion involves a waste of time. For after all, one of the objects of education is devotion to public good and disposition cannot be too early instilled in the minds of our young men."

He was largely responsible for mobilising the students in Madras for social service through his writings and speeches.

From the tributes that were paid to him after his

death, it is clear that but for his pronounced views on social reform, Subramania Iyer would have been elected to the high office of President of the Indian National Congress. In their book, *Congress and Congressmen in the Pre-Gandhian Era* (1885-1917), Messrs Bimanbehari Majumdar and Bhakat Prasad Mazumdar point out that Subramania Iyer was not selected as President of the Congress because, "One of the reasons which stood in the way of his selection was that on account of his advanced views on social reforms he was not liked much in his home province or in the conservative circles in other provinces. He was bold enough to practise what he preached. He gave his widowed daughter in marriage. He advocated through his paper that the Congress should not remain neutral on questions of social reform." They also recall what he wrote in 1891 : "By giving prominence to certain social problems, it (the Congress) would run no risk of narrowing its national character. It would not repel politicians and it would attract many who are not primarily politicians..... It is not entirely a question of convenience. It is one that will ultimately have to be decided on grounds of moral duty and historical necessity and the time for the decision cannot be far distant." But his non-election to the Congress Presidentship did not deter him from giving of his best to the organisation. He was elected a member of the deputation which waited on Lord Elgin to present a copy of the resolution passed at the tenth Congress at Madras. Five years later the Congress that met at Lucknow elected him a member of its committee—forerunner of the present All-India Congress Committee.

He was considered an authority on financial, economic and agrarian matters and he either moved or

effectively contributed to many a resolution at the various Congress sessions concerning these topics. As already mentioned, Subramania Iyer moved the first resolution at the Bombay Congress demanding a Royal Commission to go into the affairs of Indian administration. He had great belief in the efficacy of British parliamentary control over Indian affairs. He thought that such a course would curb the vagaries of officialdom in India and also put an end to the various contradictory views then current about the affairs of India. He did not think much of the India Council which consisted of retired officials and compared it to the East India Company's Court of Directors which was superseded when the British Government took over the reins of administration after Great Uprising. He wanted the best brains in English public life to interest themselves in Indian affairs instead of leaving them to the self-appointed champions of Indian aspirations who had a stake in the maintenance of the *status quo*.

Subramania Iyer went to England in 1897 to give evidence before the Welby Commission on Indian expenditure as a representative of Madras Presidency. This visit came as an eye-opener to him. Wherever he went in England, he was received with courtesy and listened to with interest. The matter ended there. The English people were too much absorbed in their business and other interests to spare any thought for far-away India. He found that a petty matter affecting a small parish in an English county attracted greater attention in Parliament than the affairs of 300 million Indians.

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee coincided with Subramania Iyer's visit to England and he wrote a series of letters to his paper pointing out the shabby treatment meted out to India and her public men at functions got

up to mark the occasion. Not a single Indian of note was invited to any of the official functions. Those who attended them from India represented nobody but themselves. A small colony like Natal in South Africa was represented by its Prime Minister. "The Colonial Premiers," Subramania Iyer wrote, "are here (in England) as guests of the State and they are feted, entertained and honoured everywhere not only in London, but in the county towns too. It is, of course, the policy at the present moment to make much of these premiers and coax and flatter them into making some sort of commercial concessions to England. Only a policy of coaxing and flattery will succeed in regard to these colonies which are self-governing countries and which will effectively resist any interference with their independence from the mother country. But India is a subject country and her feelings as well as her interests may be tampered and sported with, according to the sweet will of the ruling country. England, therefore, does not care to conciliate India, and her statesmen add insult to injury by showing no attention whatever on this memorable occasion to Indian gentlemen present in London......"

A dinner was given by the Prince of Wales in the Imperial Institute to the visiting Premiers. No one from India was invited even though she paid towards the upkeep of the Institute. Subramania Iyer called it an "expensive sham" and "a huge fraud". Indians, he pointed out, were excluded despite the Prince's hope that the Institute would "knit together the bonds of fellowship and goodwill not only between our great colonies, but also with our Indian Empire." Subramania Iyer told *The Hindu's* readers that the colonies had done nothing for the mother country whereas but for her Indian Empire, England would not have been a world power.

He addressed a number of meetings in England besides tendering valuable evidence before the Royal Commission on public expenditure presided over by Lord Welby as an unofficial witness. After his return to India, he advised the people to try to make up with the British officials and make renewed efforts to get English politicians to interest themselves in Indian affairs. This he admitted was an uphill task.

His evidence before the Welby Commission came in for unmerited criticism at the hands of the Anglo-Indian Press in the country. Dadabhai Naoroji and William Wedderburn, who were connected with the enquiry, however, expressed the view that Subramania Iyer acquitted himself "capitally". Lord Welby, a bureaucrat himself, was prone to agree with the views of officials on the Commission, whereas the non-official members were equally determined to make a dent in the bureaucratic armour.

Subramania Iyer's evidence ranged over a wide field from the Police administration to Railway construction and from the division of financial powers between the Supreme Government and the Provinces to the steady drain of wealth from India to England. He attacked the extravagant spending and wanted the Military Bill to be drastically reduced. He pointed out that India was made to pay for Britain's imperial ambitions. In this connection, he bitterly attacked the practice of the Supreme Government (in India) of appropriating for itself the savings effected by the Provinces. He wanted the revenues to be bifurcated between the Supreme Government and the Presidencies and also the right to discuss and vote on the Budget to prevent unnecessary spending. He favoured a Parliamentary committee to control Indian expenditure.

He also countered the view put forward by the British that railways would eliminate the rigours of famine as foodgrains could be carried into the interior of the country. Of course, the Railways are now an asset to free India. But Subramania Iyer was right then in pointing to the other side of the medal. He expressed his fear that the newly-laid railway lines would only succeed in snuffing out the village industries by carrying into the interior machine-made foreign goods; and he thought that the railways would also help British industries in quickly getting raw materials from hitherto inaccessible areas to the ports for onward movement to England. As for the financial implications of railway construction, Subramania Iyer told the Commission that the money was borrowed from English financiers and the Government of India was giving a guarantee of profits to attract capital. Both the capital and the interest, he emphasised, were drained out of India. The British also kept for themselves the top posts in the various railway companies and Indians had to content themselves with minor jobs. He said that the only way to prevent famines was to undertake irrigation project and not to lay railway lines. These outspoken pronouncements were not to the liking of British officials, both in India and in England. He also urged that one or two Indians should be added to the India Office and should be chosen by the non-official Indians in the Viceroy's Executive Council. He also wanted the term of members to be reduced from ten to five years.

The national movement has thrown up political leaders some of whom were better known than Subramania Iyer, but very few could equal him as a writer and speaker on economic nationalism. We have it on the authority of C. Y. Chintamani that no less a man than

Gokhale himself said that "there was no other editor in India who had the same masterly grip of public question as Subramania Iyer." After leaving *The Hindu*, he founded a weekly, *United India*, which dealt with the economic problems of the country in an authoritative way. He also wrote a book—*Some Economic Aspects of British Rule in India*—in 1903 in which he lucidly analysed the economic ills of India. Next only to the political emancipation of the country, he devoted much time to the miserable condition of the peasantry and expressed the opinion that it was a direct result of foreign domination. The Mahajana Sabha conducted a survey on the economic condition of the ryot and Subramania Iyer and P. Anandacharlu took a leading part in such work. He criticised the Revenue Department for enhancing land rents without taking into account the peasants' capacity to pay. The British authorities in India maintained that the peasant was growing prosperous because of the increase in prices of agricultural produce. In his book mentioned above, Subramania Iyer pointed out that it was the middleman who cornered the profit and the peasant was as poor as even. "In most cases," he wrote, "the ryots are unable to choose their own time or conditions in the disposal of their produce. The great majority are so poor that the produce of the land hardly suffices to feed the family for more than some months in the year; the deficiency being made good by wages earned in the village or in the neighbouring town. The ryot cannot, therefore meet from his produce the requirements of himself and his family as well as the demands of the Government and the money-lender. For one or the other, often for both purposes, the ryot borrows at a usurious rate of interest; what produce he makes up his mind to sell off, he sells off when the pressure from

the Government or the *Sowcar* is most tight, at prices prevailing at certain seasons in the year or in adjacent towns or at the seaports. To the question, who intercepts the profits of the producer from increased prices, the reply is partly the *Sowcar,* and partly the middleman who buys the grain from the villager and sells it at a time when the market is dear."

Subramania Iyer advocated non-agriculture-based industries to loosen the stranglehold of the monsoon on the Indian economy. In this he had to come up against me vested interests of the British who wanted to keep India as a manufactory for cheap raw materials. The partition of Bengal in 1905 gave an added impetus to economic nationalism in India. There was the boycott of foreign goods and the consequent demand for *Swadeshi* goods. Subramania Iyer commended the new spirit and said that "*Swadeshism*....is a protest not only against India's industrial subjection, but also against her present condition of dependence and subordination.....Political reform was the first move along the line of least resistance; then came the social reform movement and the movement for industrial regeneration."

Subramania Iyer was nothing if not pragmatic and practical in his attempts to solve our economic problems. When the well-known banking firm of Arbuthnot and Co. failed and thousands of Indians lost their life-savings, he took the opportunity to stress the importance of starting and developing Indian banking institutions. Such institutions, he pointed out, would contribute to the success of the *Swadeshi* movement. And the safety of the deposits could be ensured by adopting co-operative banking. In an article contributed to the *Indian Review,* he wrote :

"We must learn the use of the powerful weapon of

cooperation. We must inaugurate the system of mutual confidence which is called 'credit'. Our conditions of progress being what they are, our first effort and duty should be to study and develop this system of credit, which will bring the small, scattered and lifeless atoms of wealth into organised and living capital, capable of expansion, and stimulating, training and enlarging our wealth-making capacity."

The establishment of the Indian Bank Limited at Madras served to restore the people's confidence in banking.

He launched the National Fund in Madras in 1905 to help indigent entrepreneurs and send bright boys to England for scientific and technical training. The Fund was a corollary to the Swadeshi movement. In an appeal on the occasion, he asked the people to contribute once a year to the Fund to help industrial regeneration. Emphasising the need for self-help he wrote, "Whatever may be the secret springs of the economic and fiscal policies of the British rule in India, its representatives dare not oppose or thwart the progress of our efforts for our redemption from our present industrial thraldom. Yet in how many directions have we been deterred by financial difficulties from making a beginning or following up the beginning once made ? Everywhere people are convinced of the immense importance of properly qualified experts to start and direct new industries for which natural facilities exist in full abundance all over the country. A wise and benevolent Government has made no provision in our own country for the training of such experts. When it wants the service of experts it gets them from England from amongst Englishmen, in pursuance of its general policy of exploitation of our resources of every kind. But we want the experts to be

our own countrymen, of whom hundreds must be sent every year to foreign countries to be trained in their institutions. On their return they must be placed in possession of necessary capital to start the industries in which they have been trained. Again, how do we expect to afford the necessary encouragement and help to those numerous indigenous industries which, for want of such encouragement and help, are languishing and will soon cease to exist? In short, it is superfluous to enumerate the various objects of the greatest national importance towards which a National Fund collected......and established in different centres of the country could be most effectively utilised......Love of the motherland, sacrifice for her good, enthusiasm and sustained energy are wanted. These are by no means absent among our men, more especially among the younger generation."

The Fund soon became a success. Every year on Deepavali day, students and volunteers used to go from door to door collecting money for the Fund. The proceeds were utilised for the purposes mentioned above. The National Fund Association is still in existence in Madras. Subramania Iyer undertook a tour of the Presidency to explain the object of the Fund.

Subramania Iyer wanted protection for indigenous industries and wanted free trade to go. He felt that free trade which was rejected by England herself was enabling foreign manufacturers to flood India with their finished products. In the absence of State protection, the infant industries in the country were in no position to withstand this foreign commercial onslaught.

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 affected the exports of Germany and Austria to India and England was in no position to replace them. Indian leaders and commercial interests wanted the British to help the

people in setting up new industries to tide over the difficulties, but nothing came out of this appeal.

Closely linked with the economic dependence of the country on a foreign power was the drain on India's resources. Every year crores of rupees used to be drained out of the country by the British as salaries they earned, profits on their investments and the interest they got on loans raised in England. Dadabhai Naoroji was the first nationalist leader to propound the "drain" theory and it was soon taken up by others. Subramania Iyer was an ardent advocate of the theory.

Then there were the Home Charges to defray the expenses of the Government of India in England. These kept on mounting year after year. The Home Charges consisted of payment of interest on Indian public debt and the guaranteed railways, the cost of military and civilian stores supplied to India, civil and military charges paid in England on account of India, including the cost of the Secretary of State's establishment and payment of pensions to European officials of the Indian Government.

As if these things were not enough, the Indian Government used to pay the hated Exchange Compensation Allowance to its non-domiciled English officers to offset the fall in the gold value of the rupee. It was a privileged exchange rate of 1sh. 6d. per rupee to enable them to remit amounts to England at the previous value of the rupee. This in effect meant that the Anglo-Indian officials used to get more money than their actual salary. Even people who never sent any money to England used to claim the Allowance with the connivance of the Government. This was galling to the nationalist leaders. The total expenditure on this account from 1893 to 1898 was nearly rupees five crore.

The demand for the Indianisation of Services was also partly economic, as Indian administrators would not have cost the tax-payer as much as their British counterparts and the salaries they earned would not have been carried out of the country.

Chapter 6

SOCIAL REFORM

Of the many movements launched for the regeneration of India during the nineteenth century, none encountered greater difficulties than social reform. It was because a majority of the educated classes who spearheaded the movement preached social reform from the platform but stuck to the old ways in their homes. The movement, therefore, had to fight not only the orthodox sections but also these doubtful allies.

The country was generally not prepared for the abolition of child marriage, for widow remarriage, for the anti-nautch campaign and for gradual integration of castes, which formed the principal constituents of social reform. These were considered a part of the Indian way of life handed down from generation to generation and opposition to them was looked upon as sacrilege. The joint family system was very much in vogue and the opinion of the elders counted; however much the educated young men lectured on the social evils, few could carry their elders with them on the question of social reform.

Madras Presidency was a late convert to social reform. The South Indians generally had been left untouched by the Muslim invasions and they preserved to a great extent the Hindu way of life with all its rigidity in social matters which the reformers wanted to eradicate. The Christian missionaries did some pioneering work to shake Hindu society out of its complacency through conversions to their faith. They exhorted those people who were dissatisfied with the prevailing social

conditions to leave the Hindu fold and swell the ranks of Christian converts. The orthodox among the Hindus, far from resiling from their conservative stance, became more rigid to guard themselves against further proselytisation.

But everybody, irrespective of whether he was orthodox or heterodox, gradually took to English education as a knowledge of that language was a sort of a passport for getting jobs. The spread of English education resulted in the breaking down of caste barriers, as a Pariah who learnt English had equal opportunities to compete with a Brahmin for jobs. Social reformers like G. Subramania Iyer considered English education as godsend as it facilitated their work.

The demand for political emancipation led to an enquiry into social conditions. This was because the British often cited the social backwardness of the Indian as an excuse for not granting them self-rule. Indian leaders were fully aware of the fact that they could promote social reform without the aid of foreign rulers, unlike political emancipation which only the British could grant. Social reform, therefore, became an adjunct to the political movement. The Indian National Congress, however, did not concern itself with it in those days because of the divergence of views among the Congressmen on the question. But every Congress session used to have Social Conference where workers in the field, some of them prominent Congressmen like Subramania Iyer, used to meet.

In the South, Raghunatha Row, Kandukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu and Chentsal Rao exerted themselves in the field of social reform. Raghunatha Row constituted a one-man brains trust, as it were. A noted Sanskrit scholar, he often used to quote from the Shastras to

prove that widow remarriage had Shastraic sanction behind it. Subramania Iyer considered Raghunatha Row as his Guru. Veeresalingam founded a Widows' Home in Rajahmundry and was a practical social reformer like Subramania Iyer.

Subramania Iyer was of the view that social reform should go hand in hand with political emancipation, if it was not actually to precede it. Equality of opportunity to him meant equality to all sections of the population, including those hitherto considered the lowest, and not merely to a select few. He was intensely against social evils like child marriage and an inflexible caste system. He wanted the Hindu community to give up the old ways and move with the times if it were to survive.

To reform Hindu society was a Herculean task and he had no illusions about it.

Speaking in 1893, on the topic "Is the social condition of the Pariah satisfactory?," Subramania Iyer confessed, "Caste is a regular Himalayan mountain. It cannot be pulled down by any feeble effort." "Nevertheless," he declared, "the Himalayan mountain must go down. Either caste must go down or we must go down." He pointed out that in every country, caste was a necessary institution at a certain stage of development; in every society the priestly class tended to arrogate to itself all learning, powers and emoluments in a kind of monopoly; the industrial and warrior classes, however, pushed themselves forward and adjusted the social systems. "But in India, instead of the priestly class being relegated to its appropriate place in the social system, it dragged to its level the warrior and the industrial classes. Society became unsettled and the Brahmin structure collapsed at the first touch of the foreign influence. If we do not alter our old institutions so as to

suit modern conditions and needs, the decadence which has set in will spread and envelop us." The caste system, according to him, had "contributed to the crushing of the high moral feelings, of the ethical nature of the Hindus and of that divine instinct, the sense of man's duty to man, irrespective of birth or rank."

He advocated the replacement of caste as the basis of social status "by equality of footing to all" and the substitution of "custom as a motive of action by reason and sympathy."

Subramania Iyer realised that the change could not be peaceful and gradual as the old institutions which had outlived their usefulness had to be rooted out, thus inviting violent opposition from vested interests. In the case of European social evolution only adjustments were needed and they were supplied by the Church and the State. Both these things were absent in India. Because of the multiplicity of religions and sects there was no recognised Church and the reins of authority were in the hands of an alien Power which did not sympathise with popular aspirations, either political or social.

Subramania Iyer did not, however, think that the time for discussion on social matters was past. He wanted the transformation to take place through persuasion, if possible, and through compulsion, if necessary.

Although a radical social reformer, he never entertained the idea of quitting Hinduism to reform society. He remained a Hindu till the end and tried to cleanse Hindu society from within. He aimed at converting the majority to the views held by himself and his friends who then constituted a small minority.

A domestic tragedy provided a test case for Subramania Iyer to prove his *bona fides* as a social reformer. His daughter, Sivapriyammal, lost her husband when she

was barely 13. Hitherto her father had been merely propagating widow remarriage; now he got an opportunity to translate his words into deeds. He took the girl and a boy of his choice to Bombay in 1889 and got them married there. The marriage coincided with the Bombay session of the Congress. Charles Bradlaugh, the great British dissenter, Sir William Wedderburn and Ranade were some of the notables who attended the wedding which took place in the house of Madhavadass Raghunathdass, the great champion of widow remarriage in Western India. Raghunatha Row officiated at the ceremonies. The marriage produced results which were totally unexpected. There was the usual social boycott of Subramania Iyer's family, which was expected. But the orthodox sections who breathed fire for lesser offences dared not excommunicate him even when the newly-weds were sheltered under his roof. Four months after the marriage, Mrs. Subramania Iyer passed away. There was no trouble at the time of the funeral and reports in the papers were full of the change in the people's attitude. A priest belonging to Subramania Iyer's own sect officiated at the proceedings and her relatives were present.

Subramania Iyer waged a heroic struggle to better the lot of women. He favoured the raising of the marriageable age of girls. He welcomed the action of the Mysore Government which introduced progressive legislation affecting women and wanted other native Princes to follow suit. He was of the view that social progress hinged on the proper education of women. He thought it absurd to train women "in an elementary and in a thoroughly inefficient and milk-and-water system of education which is all we have in the country and which many people think is quite enough. My own opinion

is that their education should be as high, as scientific, as invigorating as the education of men".

He wanted modern Indian women to occupy the same honoured place in society which their sisters did before the advent of Muslims. "Men," he declared, "have no right to discuss and fix the position of women in society, but women should themselves determine it..... If only men opened women's minds and developed their intelligence, there is no knowing what position they cannot fill and what functions they cannot discharge with credit."

To further social reform, he founded the Hindu Social Reform Association which used to maintain liaison with similar associations in other parts of the country. As has already been mentioned, he guided the *Indian Social Reformer* which was conducted in Madras by his juniors, K. Natarajan and K. Subba Rao. When Natarajan took the journal with him to Bombay, the movement had no organ of its own in Madras. *The Social Reform Advocate* was founded as a successor to the *Indian Social Reformer.*

The Hindu Social Reform Association had a chequered career. It brought together on a common platform a number of educated persons who belived in social progress. The members of the Association had to make a promise to educate girls and women of their households and not to marry off their sisters and daughters before they were twelve years old. Lectures were arranged for women folk at frequent intervals. The Association launched a vigorous campaign against the employment of nautch women and against prostitution. It held a public meeting and appealed to high-ranking British officials not to participate in social functions where dancing girls entertained guests.

The Association also urged the Government not to have Indians in the Legislative Councils who patronised women of loose morals.

As a publicist Subramania Iyer wanted the press to champion the cause of the weaker sections of the community and hasten the process of social transformation in keeping with the times. Speaking on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of *The Hindu* in 1903, he said : "The educated countrymen of mine.....should bear the fact in their mind that the past is not so important as the present, nor the present so important as the future. Therefore I pray and wish that *The Hindu* will not swerve from the policy it has always followed from its commencement and will advocate and champion progress not only in regard to our political conditions but also along all lines of social and material advancement. Change, reform and progress constitute the life of a nation."

His claim as a social reformer rests on the fact that he stormed the citadel of conservatism in the southern part of the Madras Presidency by setting a practical example. By giving his widowed daughter in remarriage, he conclusively proved, if any proof was needed, that he did not hesitate to translate his words into deeds. Most of the social reformers of the day were fiery platform orators but very few of them actually practised what they preached.

Subramania Iyer's action in his daughter's case gave a boost to the social reform movement in the South. Never before in Madras Presidency had a man of his standing swerved from the path of social conformism. His predecessors in social reform were comparatively unknown. As the Editor of *The Hindu* and the *Swadesamitran* and as a front-rank politician, he wielded

enormous influence which was by no means confined to the South. His action infused courage in other social reformers who found themselves in a similar situation. They had the satisfaction that if they were committing a "sin", they were doing so in great company.

Chapter 7

FAMILY LIFE

We shall now return to pick up the threads of Subramania Iyer's personal and family life. He was lucky in that his wife Meenakshi was endowed with a measure of courage and patience that matched his own. They had one son and three daughters. The son, T. S. Viswanatha Iyer, was born in August, 1887; his life became a long training for work in the *Swadesamitran*. He was more or less looking after it when Subramania Iyer gave up active political life round about 1908. Subramania Iyer handed over the editorship of the paper to A. Rangaswami Iyengar who acquired the Swadesamitran Press in 1915. Rangaswami Iyengar appointed Viswanatha Iyer as General Manager of the paper; the latter became Printer and Publisher, which posts he retained till his retirement in 1947. Viswanatha Iyer passed away on July 19, 1958.

Subramania Iyer had three daughters: Sivapriya to whom he was deeply attached because of her early sufferings; Kamalambal who married L. A. Jagadisa Iyer, ~~an advocate;~~, and Gnanambal who married C. S. Balasundaram Iyer who rose to be Second Member of the Executive Council of H. H. the Maharaja of Mysore.

Sivapriya had been married off at a very early age but her boy-husband died a year later of typhoid. Subramania Iyer, who had been stunned by the news he received while he was on a tour of the South, quickly made up his mind to have Sivapriya married again. This marriage (referred to earlier) took place in Bombay on December 31, 1889, but Sivapriya and her (second)

husband lived with Subramania Iyer and the rest of the family. Meenakshi, her mother, died soon after Sivapriya's marriage on April 25, 1890, to be exact. It was, thereafter, Sivapriya who attended to the management of Subramania Iyer's household till her own death on December 7, 1899. She was only 22 when she died but she had earned high praise for the way she looked after her father and nursed her husband during a long illness. An obituary note in *The Hindu* recorded that she was "devoted to her father, of whose stupendous sacrifice for her during the last ten years she had the keenest and most loving sense."

CHAPTER 8

LABOUR OF LOVE

Quite early in his journalistic career, Subramania Iyer felt the need to educate the non-English-knowing Tamil masses by starting a language journal. The idea bore fruit with the establishment of the *Swadesamitran*, a weekly, in 1882.

Even for an intrepid publicist like him, it was a bold venture but he considered it a labour of love. He was farsighted enough to realise that the ordinary citizen would eventually come into his own and the educated middle classes could not be at the head of the national movement for ever. The venture, however, was like embarking on a voyage in uncharted seas. There was no example which the Editor could follow. He had to do a lot of improvisation. His experience in *The Hindu* no doubt stood him in good stead; he had learnt how to conduct a newspaper. But still the work he had undertaken was formidable. The English papers could bank on a certain amount of background knowledge in their readers; not so a vernacular paper, some of whose readers were unlettered and had the paper read out to them. Subramania Iyer meant the *Swadesamitran* for the man in the street whose knowledge of English was almost negligible and not as a supplement to *The Hindu.*

To present news to such readers in simple Tamil was by no means easy. New words which could be easily understood had to be coined. Here he encountered opposition from Tamil *pandits* and from purists who wanted to have a say in the matter and were effectively re-

buffed. Subramania Iyer adopted well-known English words like government, railways, prosecution, etc., and he thereby did a lot for the healthy growth of the Tamil language.

The *Swadesamitran* came just in time to satisfy the news-hunger of the Tamil people. The country was passing through an exciting period. The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon raised great hopes. His scheme for local self-government evoked popular enthusiasm. Then there was the Indian National Congress which began ventilating the grievances of the people. There was, therefore, a general awakening in the country. Not everybody in Tamil Nad could read *The Hindu* and keep track of the events at home and abroad. It was to cater to the needs of this class of readership that the journal was started.

After leaving *The Hindu,* Subramania Iyer could devote full attention to the *Swadesamitran,* and he soon converted it into a daily. Speaking on the occasion of the paper's Silver Jubilee, he said :

"I thought it a good thing to develop the *Swadesamitran* into a daily newspaper, but many expressed the view that it was not possible to conduct a daily newspaper in Tamil and that it would be difficult to find persons to support it. I did not give up my resolve but carried it out. Backing me in my venture were the Tamil people who took kindly to the "Mitran"..... The letters I received about the confusion in the recent Surat session of the Congress (1907) are evidence of how actively our people are studying the developments in our country. Though we feel happy that this paper has done so much good, running it has been a difficult task. It is necessary for the Tamil journalist to know both English and Tamil."

In his *History of Indian Journalism,* Mr. J. Natarajan

points out that "the first 17 years in the life of the *Swadesamitran* were remarkable for the richness of incidents both inside India and in the outside world." He goes on : "The curiosity of the people was aroused and they desired to know more and more about the events of the world. The *Swadesamitran* honestly attempted to satisfy the increasing need. Lord Ripon's scheme of local self-government created interest in public affairs. The Indian National Congress was started in 1885 to voice the grievances of the people...People read with avidity all news about general political discontent in India in the closing years of the last century, Bal Gangadhar Tilak's imprisonment, the Boer War, etc. With knowledge of world events and world conditions and increasing realisation of the condition of affairs at home came political knowledge and an awakening of national spirit."

With its conversion into a daily in 1889, the *Swadesamitran* entered on its second phase. The defeat of Russia at the hands of Japan in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 exploded the myth of European invincibility. The account of the war provided exciting fare for the readers. The paper published details about the rise and growth of Japan as a modern power.

The *Swadeshi* agitation that followed in the wake of the partition of Bengal, the starting of the Tuticorin Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company, a national enterprise on which were focused the patriotic feelings of the people of South India, the murder of Collector Ashe at Tinnevelly junction, the imprisonment of leading political workers, Subramanya Shiva and V. O. C. Pillai, the prosecution for sedition launched against the Editor, the Balkan War of 1912 and the outbreak of the World War I were some of the notable events which the paper reported in detail, with the necessary background information.

As Mr. Natarajan has noted : "Subramania Iyer did his utmost to satisfy the people's incessant desire to know, and earned their goodwill and support. Subscribers increased; with expanding circulation and influence, the *Swadesamitran* became firmly established in Tamil Nad. . .a well set and well-conducted Tamil newspaper."

It was no easy task that confronted Subramania Iyer. He had first to attract readers, then to keep them and to educate them. Speaking at the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the *Swadesamitran* in October, 1932, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, who had taken over the Editorship of the paper, said that the personal hardship, difficulties and risks that his great predecessor faced would have daunted a lesser man. He said :

"In the first or formative stages of vernacular journalism in South India, Mr. G. Subramania Iyer through the *Swadesamitran* played a conspicuous part. Neither the language and vocabulary of the time nor the extent of the education, knowledge and culture among the ordinary people was of such a character that made it possible for him to copy or imitate the English newspaper, whether British or Indian. He had to write down, in a sense, to the level of the readers in their own language, in a form in which they could understand it and in a manner in which they could be interested in the news, in the information and knowledge, and in the comments and criticisms that had to be employed in the educative process. I recollect the days when I used to meet Mr. Subramania Iyer in his editorial sanctum wrestling with the problem of presenting the features of a new development in the foreign policy of the great powers of Europe to his Tamil readers or with an exposition of the facts and events connected with many of those crises in the Near East, the Middle East or the Far East that

subsequently led to international complications. I recollect also that his main desire was to put it all in language not of the literary purists and *pandits* whose predilection towards archaic and difficult forms of expression was well known but in language which can give expressive form to thoughts which the ordinary, not the erudite vernacular reader, may grasp and follow. By steady and persistent effort, the *Swadesamitran* succeeded in securing the support and co-operation of the *pandits* also."

For his purposes Subramania Iyer coined new phrases to express complex modern ideas but he did not hesitate to borrow liberally from English such words as "Railway", "Police", etc., which his readers could understand without difficulty. To express these simple concepts, he did not fabricate what Jawaharlal Nehru, in a similar context, was later to characterise as "monstrosities". He drew freely on words and phrases in current use in the other languages. His love for Tamil was as great as anybody else's. He had started the *Swadesamitran* solely in the interests of the Tamil people. At public meetings he called on leaders to speak in the mother-tongue. He himself spoke in Tamil whenever he toured Tamil Nad. He published Tamil pamphlets on the various subjects discussed in the Congress sessions and elsewhere. What he insisted on, however, was that we should evolve a clear and simple style in Tamil, both for speaking and writing. To him goes, in a very large measure, the credit for rousing public interest in current affairs and for building up an enlightened public opinion in Tamil Nad.

CHAPTER 9

AN EVENTFUL DECADE AND AFTER

G. Subramania Iyer's visit to England in March, 1897, to give evidence before the Welby Commission on administrative expenditure strained the financial resources of *The Hindu*. He returned in August that year and (as has been acknowledged by Veeraraghavachariar) continued to conduct the paper with great ability and zeal: "His writings after his return from England were greatly admired and during the great Bombay state trials bore on them the stamp of great vigour and earnestness." The paper's finances did not prosper; and its great friend, the Maharaja of Vizianagaram, had passed away suddenly in May.

In an article in the Silver Jubilee Supplement of *The Hindu* issued on September 21, 1903, Veeraraghavachariar had written that Subramania Iyer "got disheartened on account of the heavy encumberances of *The Hindu* and wished for a dissolution of partnership". He had added, "The proposal came upon me as a thunderbolt....We had worked shoulder to shoulder for more than a quarter of a century and it was, therefore, with the greatest sorrow and pain that I received the proposal. I, however, submitted to the inevitable."

The great partnership between the two persons who had nurtured *The Hindu* was broken in September, 1898. A notice over the signatures of Subramania Iyer and Veeraraghavachariar published in *The Hindu* of October 3, said:

"It is hereby notified for the information of all those whom it may concern that the partnership which had

subsisted between G. Subramania Iyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar in the proprietorship of *The Hindu* newspaper and its press, plant, buildings, etc., was, by mutual agreement dissolved on the 14th day of September, 1898, and that as the said M. Veeraragavachariar has become the sole proprietor of *The Hindu* newspaper and press, etc., G. Subramania Iyer has ceased to have any proprietory connection with *The Hindu* and he has consequently no interest in the assets of the said partnership relating to *The Hindu* newspaper, buildings and its press, etc., which may already exist or which may hereafter accrue due, and the said G. Subramania Iyer is not responsible to any of the creditors of the partnership for any liabilities subsisting on the 14th day of September, 1898, or which may have been incurred since the said date."

Subramania Iyer, too, must have felt the parting keenly though he must have been happy that the editorship of *The Hindu* was passing on to C. Karunakar Menon whom he had trained over many years. For some time he and his partner had not seen eye to eye on many questions and, as he was not willing to make compromises, particularly in the field of social reform, their differences had soon become painfully public. Subramania Iyer had meanwhile taken over as Editor of *The Madras Standard* (English daily) as well as *United India* (English weekly started by him). He continued to edit the *Swadesamitran,* the Tamil daily, which he had founded and which he was to develop so well in the next few years. Here surely was a man of extraordinary energy. Veeraraghavachariar, on his part, edited the Tamil bi-weekly *Hindu Nesan* in addition to conducting *The Hindu.* Subramania Iyer from his new posts criticised the style and substance of certain articles in *The Hindu* and

Veeraraghavachariar replied to them in such a personal fashion as to provoke his old partner to file a suit for defamation. Luckily, good sense prevailed; credit for this must go to S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar who was later to take up the editorship of *The Hindu* and who was now legal adviser to Veeraraghavachariar. On his advice, Veeraraghavachariar made a statement denying any intention of saying anything derogatory to Subramania Iyer, expressing unqualified regret and offering to publish the apology in the *Hindu Nesan*. The case was withdrawn and the public spared the sight of two former comrades fighting a legal battle.

It is refreshing to note that neither of the two allowed any bitterness to linger in his mind. Among the most honoured invitees at the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of *The Hindu* on September 21, 1903, was its first Editor and right nobly did Subramania Iyer respond to the call for a speech. He regretted that he was "no longer in the proud position of conducting the leading organ of the native community in Southern India." But he rejoiced that "the little seed planted twenty-five years ago" had germinated and grown to such fine proportions. Veeraraghavachariar made a handsome and generous reply. He said, "My friend, Mr. G. Subramania Iyer, regretted that he is not connected with the paper today, but I can say to him and to all present that his heart and soul are with me today in the celebration of the twenty-fifth year of the child which we both have nurtured and brought up till now."

The eminent jurist and reformer of Bombay, Mahadev Govinda Ranade, was among the many who deplored the break-up of the partnership. His reaction was understandable as *The Hindu* under Subramania Iyer was in the forefront of the social reform movement.

The period between 1893 to 1902 was a very eventful one in the life of G. Subramania Iyer. In 1893, he had been elected to the Madras Municipal Council (now the Corporation) and served his fellow citizens as a Councillor for nine years. His re-election in 1896 and 1899 clearly proved that he had won the esteem and love of his constituents. He was a model councillor and exerted himself in providing civic amenities. In August, 1896, P. Theagaraja Chettiar is reported to have good-humouredly complained that more money was spent in Subramania Iyer's constituency (Triplicane) on projects of sanitary improvement than in other divisions.

One of Subramania Iyer's first acts after election was to publish an appeal in *The Hindu,* seeking public co-operation and requesting that people "having a complaint and suggestion in view of action being taken by the Municipal Corporation or the Executive Officers may do me the favour of communicating the same to me personally or by means of a letter."

He established a school in his municipal division, besides running a night school. He had to spend money from his pocket to keep these schools going. He used to devote two hours a day to supervise the institutions.

He was re-elected in 1896 despite the fact that the Triplicane Literary Society, of which he had once been a shining star, actively canvassed against him and set up two candidates, one of them an English barrister, John Adam by name. The latter seems to have given offence to the voters by what they took to be his patronising attitude towards Subramania Iyer at a meeting which both of them addressed. It was one of the most hotly contested elections in the history of the old Madras Municipal Council. Six candidates were in the field and Subramania Iyer was returned by a majority of 23

votes over his nearest rival who secured 262 votes.

His re-election was welcomed by *The Hindu's* contemporary, *The Madras Times,* which was by no means a friend of his. *The Mail* expressed gladness at the result "as he has not only worked hard in the interest of the rate-payers of the division, but has taken a real interest in the municipal matters generally and his intervention in the Council debates has always been on the side of moderation."

Another municipal election which attracted more than passing attention was the one held in 1898 in which Lodd Govindoss, a wealthy young man, was pitted against Eardley Norton. Subramania Iyer supported Govindoss' candidature as he wanted rich people to interest themselves in civic affairs. Norton, who was a frequent contributor to *The Hindu,* took the Editor's support for granted and when it was not forthcoming he made no secret of his disappointment and thought personal motives actuated Subramania Iyer. Subramania Iyer wrote an article in *The Hindu* to explain his attitude. He said that a Municipal Councillorship was too small a prize for Norton as he had already served once in that capacity. He recalled the fact that the paper had supported Norton at the time of his election to the Viceregal Council. While acknowledging the popular articles written by Norton, the Editor said that his suport for Govindoss was not motivated by any personal prejudices against the former.

Subramania Iyer figured as defendant in a defamation case a few months after his leaving *The Hindu.* A retired Mysore Government servant wrote to his superiors requesting them to correct his date of birth which had been entered wrongly. *The Hindu's* report about it, he claimed, had defamed him and he, therefore, sued

Veeraraghavachariar and the former Editor of the paper for recovery of damages. The High Court (Mr. Justice Sheppard) on December 1, 1899, awarded Rs. 5,000 in damages. As it was a civil suit, the matter ended there. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and other papers expressed sympathy with *The Hindu* in having to pay the damages but they also recognised that the plaintiff was not vindictive and had not instituted a criminal complaint.

Subramania Iyer utilised his leisure in increasing his literary output and, as stated earlier, worked for two journals, *The Madras Standard* and *The United India*. The latter quickly earned a name as an authority on Indian economic questions. The *Swadesamitran* was also converted into a daily during this period.

Madras played host to the 14th session of the Indian National Congress in 1898. Subramania Iyer took an active part in making the necessary arrangements as he was one of the honorary secretaries of the Reception Committee. A feature of the Congress was that he published the proceedings in Tamil in the form of booklets so that even persons who were not conversant with English could follow the resolutions. In the following year he, along with some other prominent citizens, founded the Dravida Bhasha Sangham to promote the growth of South Indian languages by publishing ancient Dravidian works, translating scientific and technological books into southern languages and instituting prizes and awards to encourage South Indian writers.

On the domestic front the year 1899 closed on a sad note because his daughter, Sivapriya, passed away at the young age of 22. It may be mentioned here that she had been looking after her father's household ever since the death of her mother.

In 1902, G. Subramania Iyer went to Delhi to attend

the Durbar at the invitation of Lord Curzon. This was official recognition for a quarter of a century of public service and similar to the invitation extended to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar to attend the Delhi Durbar of 1911.

Subramania Iyer also presided over the Madras Provincial Conference which was held in June of that year at Kakinada (then known as Cocanada) in what is now Andhra Pradesh. It is good to know that *The Hindu* welcomed the election of its former editor as President of the Conference. After pointing out that he had been a devoted servant of the public for over a quarter of a century, it backed Subramania Iyer's exposure in his presidential address of the Secretary of State's claim that there was no poverty in India.

In his presidential address, Subramania Iyer protested against the piling of tax after tax upon the Indian people and against the glib official statement that India was the lightest-taxed country in Asia and in the world. His address reflected the views he was expressing weekly in his *United India* and which he set out so clearly and forcefully in his book, *Some Economic Aspects of British Rule in India.* Subramania Iyer pointed to the luxurious lives led by the representatives of British rule at "inaccessible hill stations" and to their conviction that they "know everything that is worth knowing" about conditions in India. He continued, "So long as this is the attitude of our rulers, there is not much chance of criticism, even from men of the highest weight and authority, producing favourable impression on the official hierarchy, or shaking its complacent self-confidence. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to maintain a ceaseless agitation. . .placing irrefutable facts before our rulers and exposing the fallacies of their arguments. Nothing can be dearer to us than the happiness of the

millions of our poorer classes, who, in normal periods poor and under-fed, in times of famine "die like flies"... There is no more important or worthy object to which we, who represent the political sense of the community, can devote our best energies and resources."

Subramania Iyer presided over the North Arcot District Conference in 1907 and appealed to the people to promote *Swadeshi* industries and to boycott foreign goods —to begin with, at least those goods for which there were indigenous substitutes. He took care to explain that *Swadeshi* was a practical movement and the boycott a useful and legitimate weapon to promote the country's interests.

Subramania Iyer's address delivered later as President of the Tanjore District Conference was more directly political. The developments in Bengal, with its cycle of official repressive orders and bomb outrages by inflamed revolutionaries, called for a clear lead, particularly as the Indian National Congress itself, weakened by dissensions between Moderates and Extremists, had failed to give one. Subramania Iyer said : "There is not one of us who does not recoil in mind with a feeling of abhorrence from the acts of violence of which young men have been guilty in Bengal... We do not believe for a moment that the emancipation of India lies in a direction which is not only inhuman and unwise... but is also against the instincts and nature of the Indian people. Nor is there need in India for such methods."

He went on to express the hope that British Statesmen would themselves come to believe that "continued good government in India ending in eventual self-government will prove more beneficial to *their* country than a perpetration of the present policy of repression." If they did not do so, Subramania Iyer said, "The people of

India have the other remedy open, of passive resistance, free from all acts of violence and inhumanity, a remedy which our fellow-countrymen in South Africa and the victims of misgovernment in other countries have successfully adopted." Referring to attempts by the Anglo-Indian press "to excite anger and passion in the minds of the rulers and to bring about a further curtailing of the liberties that are now vouchsafed to us", he hoped that "Lord Minto will learn his lesson of good government from the memorable career of Lord Canning rather than from the wild vapourings of an irresponsible press."

This was, however, the man whom the Madras Government resolved to charge with sedition.

Chapter 10

WAGES OF PATRIOTISM

The Government of Madras launched in 1908 a prosecution for sedition against the Editor of the *Swadesamitran,* who had now shed his other journalistic interests. It had been evident for some time that Subramania Iyer was not content to be a Moderate in politics. He could not, of course, be labelled an Extremist like Tilak, but equally surely he could not be said to belong wholly to the Gokhale school. This was a distinct change from his "Hindu" days though he himself was not conscious of it and even denied it while speaking at a function held early in 1908 to mark the Silver Jubilee of the *Swadesamitran.* Probably the change must be attributed to the time-spirit. As *The Hindu* pointed out in an editorial on the prosecution on August 22, 1908, Subramania Iyer had himself forecast this while moving the first resolution at the first session of the Congress in 1885. Noting the great advantages derived from the British connection, he had said that for the first time in the history of India, they beheld "the phenomenon of national unity among them—of a sense of national existence and of a common solicitude for the well-being and honour of the common country." He had added, "From today forward, we can with greater propriety than hithertofore speak of an Indian nation, of national opinion and national aspiration." *The Hindu* then referred to the many and varied services rendered to the national cause by Subramania Iyer and said they could hardly be termed sedition. The paper pointedly recalled that in the last Congress session held at Surat, he had thrown in

his lot with the Conventionists and given his support to the creed and the constitution framed by P. M. Mehta and Gokhale and not to those favoured by Tilak.

The Hindu warned the Government that it was prosecutions for sedition that really tended to disturb peace in the country and that in any event the Government of Madras should have stuck to the "well-understood practice acted upon in Bengal, Bombay and the United Provinces that a first warning is given to an offending editor." This procedure had not been followed in regard to Subramania Iyer "although he was fully entitled to all possible indulgence and forbearance on the part of the Government by reason of his political record, the enormous hold which he has as a public man upon the affections and esteem of his fellow-countrymen, his age and bodily health which is admittedly bad and is such as to call for universal sympathy."

But nationalism is always suspect to a foreign and reactionary regime. The Government of Madras could not distinguish between the writings of a patriot intent on making the rulers attend to the good of the people, conforming to canons of reason and justice, and the writings of those bent only on rebellion and bloodshed. The unblest word "sedition" seemed to the blind eye of authority to include both these categories. The warnings of *The Hindu* and other newspapers, the expostulations from public men, fell on deaf ears.

The prosecution attracted nation-wide attention and the view was widely expressed that a man of his standing in public life and background would not call on his countrymen to rebel against the British authorities or promote hatred towards the foreign rulers. Two affidavits filed in the court by G. A. Natesan, the noted publisher of Madras, and G. Venkataranga Row, Secre-

tary, Landholders' Association, testified to the law-abiding nature and the honesty of Subramania Iyer. Even this was ignored by the court.

He was arraigned on three complaints, and nine allegedly seditious articles published in the *Swadesamitran* were produced to substantiate the charges. He was 55 then and in failing health, residing at Courtallam Falls to recoup his health. He was arrested there on August 21, 1908, and brought to Madras. The *Swadesamitran* press, his temporary residence at Courtallam and his house in Madras were searched and some papers were seized. He had to spend three weeks in the Madras Penitentiary before wisdom dawned on the Madras Government to set him free.

The first complaint referred to three articles: "Troubles caused by the Forest Department", "One meal in two days", and "Ignorance of Englishmen".

The first article concerned a complaint by some Salem ryots on the inequity of the Forest Rules. They protested against a proposal to reserve a hitherto unreserved forest land which was being used as grazing land. Their petitions went unheeded and the paper likened the British authorities to ancient princes of the jungles who gave presents to their subjects with one hand and then sent robbers to loot them. "The British Government," it went on, "squeezes out as much as possible from its subjects, leaving only their life, and even when that goes out, it starts a famine fund and famine works and says to the people, 'See how we conduct our famine relief work on the most modern and scientific principles'."

The second article referred to a speech by Mr. Keir Hardie, the first Labour Member of the British Parliament, at Arbroath in Scotland, in which he said that many of the poor people in India had only one meal in

two days. The paper enquired whether it was not the duty of the Government to find out the truth and take remedial measures instead of blaming the people for wasteful expenditure and their refusal to explore new ways of earning. "It is not strange," the paper commented, "that the Government expresses itself thus, for it has wantonly despoiled our people of all their means of living, and will it now admit its own misdeeds?"

The third article was a rejoinder to the comment by the London journal, *The Spectator,* on the Bengal happenings where terrorists were then causing some anxious moments to the British. *The Spectator* said that when the Indians "come out to have a free fight to put an end to the British Government, the British also may begin to use their Maxim guns, but till then they must continue to rule the country with sympathy and justice." The *Swadesamitran* fastened on the last point and observed that what the people wanted was "justice, equality of treatment, liberty of speech and action" and not mere sympathy which even a dog receives from its master.

The second complaint was based on the articles, "A Whipping to the Moderates", "The Virulence of Anglo-Indian Papers", and "Who is a bad magistrate?"

A deputation of moderates from Tinnevelly which waited on the Governor, Sir Arthur Lawley, to complain against the incompetence of the district authorities to deal with the disturbances formed the subject matter of the first article. The writer questioned the Governor's observation that the riots in Tinnevelly and Tuticorin had been caused by the speeches of Chidambaram Pillai and the refusal of local leaders to help authorities in restoring law and order. The paper ridiculed the idea of the deputation. The article concluded, "Either our slavery must become perpetual or, if we desire liberty,

we must be prepared to suffer death by revolver and imprisonment and pay for a punitive police force. O Extreme Moderates! Learn now, at least, that what the English officials and papers want is that all gentlemen who call themselves Moderates should be hostile to, and separate from those whom the officials point out as Extremists, and that if the Moderates do not act so, they will also have to furnish security for good behaviour, have punitive police quartered on them and sometimes have even to go to prison."

The second article alluded to a report in a Madras Anglo-Indian daily, the *Madras Times,* which said that the purpose of the British Ruler's visit to Russia was to sell India to the Czar. The *Swadesamitran* pointed out that it was a mere ruse to frighten the people about the prospects of Russian rule and said that India had nothing to lose even if India were sold to Russia because the latter was a predominantly agricultural country and the produce of the Indian farms would not be carried away as was being done by the British industrialists.

The third article was a comment on the following remark of *The Spectator* on the Calcutta outrages. "He is a bad magistrate who discharges his duty in a way which tends to cause riots and murders, even as he is a bad minister who always allows himself to be questioned in Parliament." Referring to the Tinnevelly riots, the *Swadesamitran* said: "Thus it was because the Magistrates of Tinnevelly were bad officers that they not only caused riots, but also ordered the police to shoot down people. . . . But our responsible government, instead of punishing these magistrates for their incapacity, has in every instance applauded their conduct."

The last complaint was based on three articles entitled

"The two deceased Anglo-Indians", "Have you not still acquired sense?" and "Who is superior—an Indian or a European dog?"

The first article disputed the view held by the British that India was a dangerous country to work in and, therefore, English officials should be paid amply to make up for the risks involved. It cited the example of two retired Britons, Sir Richard Strachey and Dr. Pope, who died in England after enjoying pensions for a quarter of a century. Even at the time of their death they were employed. Not only this, they utilised their influence in India to get good jobs for their relations. The article further said that there was no family in England or Scotland which did not live on money acquired in India. "Such being the case, will the Englishmen willingly resign this country into our hands? We are aiming at rights of sovereignty and Swaraj. Will they easily give up the source of their fortunes? The Indians can now understand how much they will have to suffer before obtaining their independence and they must be prepared to suffer if they are to succeed in their efforts."

The second article criticised the action of the Principal of Muir Central College, Lucknow, in suspending a student of the M.A. class for an essay on the "Famine in India". The student had written in that essay that the famine was due to the steady drain of wealth from the country. The Principal, not content with mere suspension, got the student dismissed from the Law College where he was studying. The student subsequently apologised and offered to expunge the offending words, but to no avail. "What meanness and cruelty?" the *Swadesamitran* asked. "Cannot a student express his opinion freely even in an essay written to test his knowledge? . . . . .When this is the fate of the students who do not

sing the praise of the *feringhees* and the Government, why should our young men study under these people ? ...Why not we boycott all *feringhee* teachers and colleges even as we boycott all foreign articles ?....If popular leaders were only to establish National Colleges and students also resolve to study in such Colleges alone, the *feringhees* will have perforce to run away from our country."

The last article referred to an incident at a railway station in Punjab when a European guard beat an Indian ticket collector for frightening his dog. The paper wryly remarked that it would be better for an Indian to be born to a dog owned by a white man and enjoy privileges than to be "born of mother India".

The trial preliminaries dragged on for a few weeks. Subramania Iyer was refused bail by both the Chief Presidency Magistrate and the High Court even though Major (afterwards Colonel) Niblock, an eminent member of the Indian Medical Service, examined Subramania Iyer and said that confinement would adversely affect his health as he was "a heart case" besides being a victim of dyspepsia and leprosy. This was corroborated by Dr. M. Krishnaswami, an M.D. of Madras University. Two well-known lawyers argued the case : T. Rangachari defended Subramania Iyer while Nugent Grant appeared for the Government.

Public opinion had been roused by the impending trial of a great public figure, especially an ailing one. *The Pioneer,* with whom Subramania Iyer had fought many a political battle, summed up the general feeling that "it is sad that a man of such standing should now come under even the suspicion of such a crime as sedition." R.N.M.—the letters but barely conceal the name of the eminent R. N. Mudholkar—writing to *The Hindu*

from Amraoti said that while "suppression of lawlessness or mischievous wickedness often becomes a dire necessity to just and kind-hearted men, care has to be taken that friends are not mistaken for foes or the reformers of society for destroyers of the social order."

The Madras Government realised that they were swimming against the current of public opinion and began looking for a face-saving device to get out of the morass. They instructed their counsel, Nugent Grant, to withdraw the case under Section 494 of the Criminal Procedure Code on certain conditions being fulfilled. Nugent Grant indicated that the chief considerations that weighed with the Government were Subramania Iyer's age, his failing health and the undertaking he had given to the Government to abstain in future from any public writing or speaking or from any action which might excite class hatred or promote sedition. Subramania Iyer, whose health was steadily declining, told the court, "I have had at no time any intention of exciting any disaffection towards the Government or promoting disloyalty. I intended that at no time in my life and never shall I do so. To make that assurance doubly sure I am prepared to execute a bond for good behaviour. I only pray Your Worship to make the amounts moderate. I also add that I had no intention of exciting racial feeling in all my life." Thereupon, the Chief Presidency Magistrate, F. D. Bird, asked him to furnish a bond for good behaviour for a period of one year under Section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code, for a sum of Rs. 5,000 with two sureties of Rs. 2,500 each. Tuljaram Lal and P. Lakshminarasu stood surety.

When the case was withdrawn and Subramania Iyer released on 5th September, 1908, the news was widely acclaimed and meetings were held at various centres in

South India to express relief and gratitude to the authorities. The Executive Committee of the Madras Mahajana Sabha, meeting under the presidency of L. A. Govindaraghava Iyer, resolved "to convey its thanks to the Government of Madras for the withdrawal of the prosecution against G. Subramania Iyer."

Welcoming Government's decision to withdraw the case against its former Editor, *The Hindu* summed up public feeling in India that the prosecution "need not, and ought not, to have been instituted." The paper remarked, "It is not often that we see the British Government in this country retracing a step once taken, or admitting an error of judgment in having taken a particular course of action." But *The Hindu* took the opportunity of pointing out that the Government had not been "aware of the degree of shock to the public feeling and to the goodwill of the public towards the Government" that had resulted from the prosecution. The paper also regretted the attitude of the High Court in having refused to release Subramania Iyer on bail. "If," the paper argued, "regard for the actual state of his health was of such potency as to induce the Local Government to withdraw the prosecution, surely it ought to have been sufficient to ensure his release on bail. By this we do not mean today to say that there were not—we think there were—other considerations and grounds, upon the strength of which Mr. G. Subramania Iyer was entitled to be let on bail. The learned Chief Justice, however, treated the application for bail made to him, and pressed with much earnestness and force by Mr. T. Rangachari, in an off-hand and summary manner and as if the granting of bail was a matter of grace by a judge and not a right of the accused, to be granted on suitable grounds shown. The effect of the refusal of bail has been to

detain Mr. G. Subramania Iyer in custody for two weeks. We have dwelt on this point so much because the hardship of the prosecution had become centred in this particular case upon the detention in jail of the accused and it is necessary in the public interest that the highest Court of Justice in the country should, when occasion arises, so act as to restrain the Executive Government in any hasty or ill-judged action."

Chapter 11

LAST DAYS

Writing to *The Hindu* on October 6, 1908, G. Subramania Iyer said, "Owing to the inflammation of my eyes, I am unable to acknowledge the numerous letters and messages from friends in all parts of India congratulating me on my deliverance from recent trouble. To one and all of them I convey my grateful acknowledgment by means of these lines in your columns." The curtain thus came down on an unhappy episode which had exercised the public mind for quite some time. Had the drama been allowed to be played to the bitter end, there is no knowing how the public would have reacted. Luckily, good sense seems to have dawned on the Government and they heeded the voices urging moderation.

Subramania Iyer was now beginning to feel the effects not only of age but of bodily infirmities. Leprosy was taking its toll of strength and vigour. In fact it was because of the march of this disease that he had agreed to give an undertaking to the Government. The penitentiary was no place for a person afflicted with this disease. Moreover, the undertaking to refrain for one year from any public writing or speaking or any action which might excite class hatred or promote sedition was one which anybody could, and should, have given. For, as was pointed out at the time, "every British subject is under restriction not to commit offences under the Penal Code". Subramania Iyer had simply agreed not to indulge in activities prejudicial to the public weal. For one thing, he knew that he could not move about with ease as before, and organise or address public meetings.

For another, Subramania Iyer had always maintained that his activities, whatever their nature, could and should not attract the mischief of the anti-sedition law. He would have allowed his case to be argued if he had been in good health and able to take care of his body without relying on others for help. The Government had taken Subramania Iyer into custody just after the closing of the September Criminal Session of the High Court with the result that if he chose to challenge the prosecution, he had to prepare himself to spend at least six months in the penitentiary before the proper trial could commence. Bail was refused to him and detention for such a long period would have been a cruel ordeal to one in his state of health, "dying inch by inch", to use the words of V. Krishnaswami Iyer when the latter visited him in the penitentiary after the Government's decision to withdraw the prosecution.

His eyesight began to fail only two days after his removal to the penitentiary but, with all these accumulating troubles, Subramania Iyer never for one moment believed that he should retire from active participation in public life. He spoke at many a public meeting till ill health finally forced him to retire. Notably, he dealt summarily with a critic from outside Madras Presidency who had spoken in disparaging terms of industrial enterprises that had been initiated in Madras, particularly the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company. That he had no intention of giving up his writings, he demonstrated almost immediately after his release from detention.

Subramania Iyer continued to write editorials for the *Swadesamitran* as long as his strength permitted him to do so. K. Vyasa Rao, brother of K. Subba Rao, who had served on the editorial staff of *The Hindu* and himself was one of the most dedicated of civic workers in Madras,

has left us a moving description of Subramania Iyer at work. In the course of an article on "The Making of Public Opinion in India", Vyasa Rao says :

"When I saw him a few weeks back in the gathering gloom of a late evening, as he was seated intensely listening to something that was being read out to him, he appeared to me the picture of the unvanquishable human will. His eyesight was so poor that he could hardly make out anyone who stood before him, but he had the clearest vision of the most complicated problems of Indian and world politics; and he said, as the most ordinary thing that he could have told me, that he was dictating two leading articles every morning to his Tamil daily, the *Swadesamitran.* As I was leaving him, he asked me if I could not go to him earlier in the evening, 'for,' he added, 'I am busy, very busy in the morning'. To have seen the man I saw, and to have heard from him what I heard, came upon me, I must confess, as a stunning surprise for the fraction of a minute; but instantly I realised that the man was more than flesh and blood, more than organs and limbs, that his paramount strength was his will and that it is the expression of the inscrutable entity that animates the body."

It was while Subramania Iyer was lying very ill that Mahatma Gandhi called on him. It was in 1915 when Gandhiji was in Madras. He took V. S. Srinivasa Sastri with him and the latter has described in his own simple and effective prose the meeting between the two. It was one generation bidding farewell to another. Gandhiji had no doubt won the world's acclaim by his *satyagraha* in South Africa but he was still to plan his non-violent campaign for the winning of India's freedom. Subramania Iyer, like Gandhiji himself at about that time, had worked for India's full rights as a full-fledged member

of the British Commonwealth. Gandhiji knew—none better—how much Subramania Iyer had sacrificed in the nation's cause; he had also received help from Subramania Iyer in rallying the people of India to the cause of the Indians in South Africa. It seems that when Subramania Iyer broke down and told Gandhiji that he was not able to continue active public service, the Mahatma wiped away Subramania's tears with his own hand and said that the latter had done more than his share of work for India, that he should now rest and nurse his body and that it was the turn of others to work.

It is satisfying to learn that national leaders of note visiting Madras City made it a point to call on the ailing patriot. And Annie Besant went to Subramania Iyer often to consult him on certain translations she was preparing of Hindu classics.

CHAPTER 12

TRIBUTES FROM FAR AND NEAR

G. Subramania Iyer passed away on April 15, 1916, at the age of 61. His death due to leprosy created a void in the political landscape. Tributes were paid by people drawn from different parts of the country. They ranged from stalwarts like Dadabhai Naoroji and Surendranath Banerjea to the ordinary schoolmaster in the village. This spontaneous homage to the departed leader was due to his fearless spirit which led him to espouse popular causes regardless of consequences. He could have joined the ranks of the titled gentry if only he had been a bit less critical and unbending. This self-abnegation endeared him most to the common people.

The Lucknow Session of the Indian National Congress held in 1916 paid glowing tributes to one who had been a most distinguished member. Jagat Narain, Chairman of the Reception Committee, called Subramania Iyer one of "the fathers of Indian journalism", who by his "informed and fearless writings contributed not a little to the formation and growth of an enlightened public opinion". Subramania Iyer had been "a tower of strength to the cause which we all have at heart".

Ambika Charan Mazumdar, who presided over the Lucknow Congress, said that in Subramania Iyer they had lost one of "our brave comrades whose loyalty to the country was equalled only by their spirit of self-sacrifice, and whose devotion to duty was surpassed only by their extraordinary capacity for work". He said that "Subramania Iyer, who was the first to lead the plough and turn the first sod on the Congress soil by moving the

first resolution of the first Indian National Congress, may well be called the maker of modern Madras."

Moving the condolence resolution at a memorial meeting in Madras, Karunakara Menon, who succeed Subramania Iyer as Editor of *The Hindu,* said that his chief's "greatest claim to the appreciation, gratitude and homage of his countrymen consists in the work he did in helping the development of public opinion and public life in Southern India with *The Hindu* that set the tone of public life, that imparted life and vigour to it"; and that of *The Hindu,* Mr. Subramania Iyer was the inspirer and guide. He went on : "In our younger days we felt a thrill as we read the articles in *The Hindu.* If the whole world said one thing and *The Hindu* said the opposite, we believed *The Hindu,* we sided with *The Hindu* and we followed *The Hindu.* Except some old Indian officials, who came in for severe criticism, *The Hindu* carried the entire Indian public with it... He (Subramania Iyer) had the ardour and fervour of the patriot's courage and resolution, yet he was dignified and moderate in his writings. He recognised the difficulties of Government, but he had no patience with injustice and wrong. He made no allowance for the foibles of men."

Writing about Subramania Iyer in his book *Indian Politics since the Mutiny,* C. Y. Chintamani says, "He did for Madras, principally through the columns of *The Hindu,* but also through the Congress and the Mahajana Sabha, what men like Surendranath Banerjea and Motilal Ghosh did for Bengal, and Wacha, Tilak and Gokhale for Bombay (now known as the State of Maharashtra). He was the greatest Indian journalist of his generation."

Paying a tribute to the founder of the paper in the Jubilee Number of *The Hindu,* Chintamani said, "Mr. Subramania Iyer made *The Hindu,* and *The Hindu* made

Mr. Subramania Iyer. He was its Editor for 20 years and made it an institution in Madras and a power in the land. He never wrote without knowledge; he always wrote with power... Take him, as he was, with all his strength and weakness, Mr. Subramania Iyer's name will live in the annals of Indian journalism and Indian public life as that of an eminent man who was untiring in the service of the motherland and who brought to that service the qualities of ability and industry, courage and persistence, faith and determination. He was a man honoured in his life-time and sorely missed after his death."

What Surendranath Banerjea said while unveiling a portrait of Subramania Iyer in the Madras Mahajana Sabha in 1914 can very well serve as an epitaph. Hailing Subramania Iyer as "the maker of modern Madras", as Ambika Charan was to do two years later, Surendranath said :

"Whatever political life there is in Madras is due to his impulse and his inspiration. I think that is absolutely true. He started *The Hindu* and laid broad and deep its foundations which have contributed to the marvellous success and prosperity which it has since attained. He founded the Mahajana Sabha, the most influential political organisation in this Presidency; started the *Swadesamitran*...he went to England in 1897, he gave evidence before the Welby Commission. I was his colleague then. His grasp of the economic problems was phenomenal and he spoke with a force, lucidity and accuracy that riveted the attention of the listeners, extorted the admiration of all. Such a man deserves all honour at our hands... Besides the activities of a journalist, political organiser of an association, he was also a great social

reformer. . . I rejoice that my friend was a social reformer. His words were followed by deeds."

Yes, Subramania Iyer spoke as he felt, wrote as he spoke and practised what he professed. That sincerity, that vigour and that directness of approach to issues of the moment we need more than ever today.

APPENDIX I

The letter written on November 11, 1885, by G. Subramania Iyer, and addressed to "Her Highness the Maha Ranee Surnomoyee, Member of the Imperial Order of the Crown of India, Cossimbazar", makes interesting reading for more reasons than one. It shows that the Editor of *The Hindu* had to devote at least some attention to its finances. Lacking modern facilities—the accomplished stenographer and typist had not then arrived on the Indian business scene—the Editor had to write his letters himself. This letter also throws light on a practice common in those days. People hesitated to enclose full currency notes with their letters for fear these would go astray. They preferred to send half notes with one letter, await news of their receipt by the addressee and send the other halves later.

Following is Subramania Iyer's letter :

The Hindu Office and National Press,
Mount Road,
Madras.
11th November, 1885.

No. 526

May it please Your Highness,

I beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of 2 half notes to the value of Rs. 15 and postage stamps for Rupee One which you were pleased to send towards your subscription for the Hindu for the year 1885 and request you will be kind enough to send the other halves at your earliest convenience.

G. Subramania Iyer
Editor

APPENDIX II

The following is the text of the editorial that appeared in the first issue of *The Hindu* dated September 20, 1878:

In accordance with the long-standing etiquette obtaining among the journalistic community, we, seeking admission into it as a new member, herald our first appearance before the public by a leader rather ostentatiously styled "Ourselves", in which we will presently set forth the circumstances that justify the appearance of a new paper, its professed intentions and aims, the line of policy it proposes to pursue and the principles by which it is to be guided. It is with great diffidence that we usher this paper into existence presuming that the indulgent public will give us a warm reception by supporting and encouraging us in spite of our shortcomings. We say with great diffidence because we had the misfortune of witnessing several attempts similar to that of ours that were made only to fail. Our diffidence does all the more weigh upon us when we remember that our predecessors were men of longer experience and superior attainments. But their lamentable failure is, in our humble opinion, owing to their individual drawbacks, and to the fact of the public not being prepared to encourage such attempts. Within recent years, circumstances have combined to produce so many changes in our society in all its aspects and these changes have so rapidly succeeded one another as to justify fresh attempts of this kind at very short intervals. When we cast a glance around us we are struck with the existence of very able and eminently successful organs of the public, ever on the alert to ventilate the opinion of the public together with their wants and grievances on the one

hand, and to guard enthusiastically the honours and prestige of the ruling Power on the other. But we are at the same time struck with the humiliating fact that all of them with a single exception are conducted either by disinterested Europeans or enterprising Eurasians. We beg leave to state that there is room as well as necessity for more than a single native organ in the metropolis of Southern India. We hope the public will pardon us the wretched platitude that one of the greatest evils that keep behind the advancement of our people is the absence of an organised public opinion. We do not share in the opinion that the educated Hindus are without convictions. On the other hand, it is not so much the alleged born ways of thinking and speaking imputed to the educated Hindus that has occasioned the absence of public opinion as the want of a well conducted native press to which the public may look to regulate their opinion. The Press does not only give expression to public opinion, but also modify and mould it according to circumstances. It is this want that we have made bold to attempt to supply. It is the duty of that section of the native community that claims to be educated to fill up as far as it is possible and practicable the gap separating the governors from the governed. We feel this and we attempt to do justice to our feeling.

We shall confine ourselves as much as possible to Indian politics. We do not belong either to that class of men who altogether ignore the superiority of a Western rule and find fault with everything the Government does or to that of those who are so far carried away by the influence of their English education as to cry down everything native and advocate as a rule the preferability of Western institutions to those of our country. With many Anglo-Indian statesmen such as Sir T. Munro, Sir H. Lawrence and several others we are of opinion that there

has been a tendency on the part of our rulers to interfere too much in the internal administration of the country. We are inclined to be conservative as much as is consistent with the material progress of the nation. The whole world is destined to be guided by Europe and it will not be desirable even if it were possible to withstand the pressure of the European influence brought to bear upon us by the spread of Western knowledge and civilisation amongst us. The principles that we propose to be guided by are simply those of fairness and justice. It will always be our aim to promote harmony and union among our fellow countrymen and to interpret correctly the feelings of the natives and to create mutual confidence between the governed and the governors. In religion, though there have been, of late, occasions to look with unpleasant feelings and suspicion upon the conduct of a particular sect of missionaries, we shall observe strictest neutrality; sectarian disputes we shall never allow to appear in our columns. But when religious questions involve interests of a political and social character we shall keep our columns open to any prudent remarks and legitimate criticisms. We have thus endeavoured to give an account of ourselves. We are fully conscious of the difficulties and responsibilities that devolve on the conductors of the Press; and we feel ourselves so unequal to the task that we have no other apology to make than the fact that the importance of the undertaking has tempted us to make an effort. If our attempts prove successful, we shall have reason to congratulate ourselves and feel proud that we have succeeded in doing what we consider to be our duty. But owing to a want of encouragement and co-operation from the public, if our attempts follow its predecessors to the "undiscovered country" we shall retire from the field with the melancholy conviction that the

native public of Southern India are not prepared to support among them more than one Native Newspaper and beg the pardon of the public for having disturbed their equanimity.

APPENDIX III

Reproduced below is almost the full text of *The Hindu's* Editorial of August 23, 1894, which gives us an idea of G. Subramania Iyer's powers as a controversialist. He set the fashion in crossing swords with editors of British-owned newspapers in India, which was so triumphantly revived later in the history of *The Hindu* by S. Rangaswami, who rose to be Editor of the paper for a brief but brilliant period. The editorial speaks for itself :

"Thanks to *The Pioneer*....the details of Dr. Smith's case are now before the public. We now know what it is that the unfortunate officer did, and what he did not do. He asked for a kiss and not getting it, he asked to be permitted to put his surgical arm round the waist of his lady-guest, but, in this respect, too, the wishes of the doctor were destined to remain barren of gratification.... *The Pioneer* thinks that if the Madras Government were to retire every officer in its employ who has ever asked a lady for a kiss and has not got it, it may be expected that there will have to be a wonderful reduction in the military establishment. The Anglo-Indian military officer evidently thinks it his peculiar prerogative to kiss any woman whose features take his fancy. If this be the case, it is time that in the interest of long-suffering civilian husbands, the Government of Madras set its face sharply against the practice. *The Pioneer* does not say anything about the military establishments of other provinces. Apparently when a military officer asks a lady elsewhere than in this benighted Presidency for a kiss, he gets it of course, and the matter naturally ends. *The*

Bombay Gazette pathetically remarks, "In this case the Doctor did not even get his kiss"—a remark quite inexplicable except on this supposition. Whether it be so or not, it is the duty of the Government no less than that of every individual, to condemn this practice of military men—or any men—purloining kisses from the lips of pretty women, even supposing that the kiss always ends with itself.

We disclaim any intention to stand in the way of Dr. Smith or any person, official or non-official, getting a hearing—and a public hearing, if need be—before being condemned or acquitted. We, however, heartily pity the position in which the unfortunate lady who, for no fault of hers, will, in the event of a public enquiry being held, be placed, and in which few women, English or Indian, would not bitterly feel being placed. But the age of chivalry has long gone out of sight, and we can understand Dr. Smith's courting a public enquiry even though it involves the crushing once again of the feelings of a woman whom, if *The Pioneer's* account be true, he has already insulted by his requests.

We think it relevant to the subject of this case to point out that it is not one solely between the Government of Madras and *The Pioneer*. The Indian public, which watches outside, is also interested in it. . . . We do not believe that a nation can ever be great unless it possesses great virtues; and we are sure, if English society were half as unsound in the basis and bottom of all family organization as the light-hearted writings in *The Pioneer* may lead people to believe, the fabric of England's vast Empire would have crumbled long ago to the dust like a castle of sand. Many things which *The Pioneer* may say or do, the Madras Government may not. The Allahabad paper may talk as lightly of the obligation of morality

as of the legitimate aspirations of the people of this country; but the Government of Madras, imbued as it is with a sense of its great responsibility to the people of England on the one hand, and to the people of India on the other, cannot treat either of them in the same contemptuous way as our contemporary. The Madras Government is no doubt, placed in a difficult position, but it may rest assured that Indian public opinion will uphold it in every endeavour to purify and elevate the moral tone of public servants."

Surgeon-Major F. C. Smith of the Indian Medical Service was permitted to resign with effect from October 9, 1894, subject to Her Majesty's approval.

APPENDIX IV

The Hindu published in its issue of May 31, 1897, the following extracts from a letter it had received from G. Subramania Iyer who was then in London to lead evidence before the Welby Commission :

264, Charing Cross Hotel,
London,
7th May, 1897.

I am still working at my evidence; the more I read, the more matter have I to put in. I have not been able to read newspapers or knock about much. In the evenings I do go about and take a walk. It is the most pleasant and bracing exercise one can take, to walk in the evenings here. One hardly gets tired, no matter what distance one may walk. Nobody thinks here of going in a carriage when he has to walk a mile or two. And everybody walks so briskly. You won't see a single person—woman or man—walking in that sluggish manner which we so often observe some of our young men doing on the sea-shore in Madras. Unless you walk briskly here, you don't get the necessary warmth. The cold climate is an incentive to brisk walking. An English youth, if he can get an hour of leisure, would sooner go about cycling or walking or for some other form of physical exercises than read or play cards. There are restaurants everywhere, and many people take their food in these places and not in their homes.

On Monday, I attended a meeting of the National Indian Association in the Imperial Institute. Justice Jar-

dine (retired) of Bombay read a paper on "Present Thought and Feeling in India". It was a dull and uninteresting paper, and he took altogether an optimistic view of the relation between Anglo-Indians and Indians. He represented the former class as being actuated by friendly feeling towards their Indian fellow-subjects and instanced, among other things, the service done by Englishmen during the plague in Bombay. Lord Hobbhouse, who was in the chair, proposed a vote of thanks to the lecturer, and Mr. Gokhale seconded him. Mr. Wacha and myself were present. Mr. Wacha was in European dress and sat bare-headed. Mr. Gokhale had his Mahratta yellow *pagdi* on, and I had my white turban. Everybody was staring at us both. Mr. Gokhale contradicted Mr. Jardine and said that there was not between the two communities the same friendly feeling now that there was some years ago, and attributed the change to the clamour for political concessions of educated Indians. I seconded the vote of thanks to the Chairman, and on Miss Manning pressing me to say a few words, I corroborated Mr. Gokhale and added that the growing misunderstanding was not so much due to the upper official classes as to younger men among Anglo-Indians, especially to Assistants in commercial firms, to planters, and to that class of fortune-seekers generally who are increasing in numbers. I referred to what a previous speaker—Mrs. Steel of Calcutta—said regarding the necessity of improving the lot of the masses, and pointed out that the educated Indians being necessarily the connecting link between the rulers and ruled, the true solution lay in the admission of these classes to a more substantial voice in the government of the country. By this time, an Anglo-Indian—the London Correspondent of the *Bombay Gazette*—rose to a point of order and observed that the discussion was becoming more political than social.

The Chairman, however, allowed me to proceed, and I wound up by conveying to the English people our gratitude for all that they have done for the improvement of India and the most profound loyalty of the Indian people.

On the same day, at 12 o'clock noon, I went to the India Office, where I wanted to search certain books for information. I saw Sir Charles Bernard, Sir Philip Hutchins and Sir Charles Turner. They were all very kind and courteous and made many inquiries about Madras. Sir Charles Bernard asked me repeatedly whether nothing was being done to improve the water-supply of Madras. He thinks the supply is inadequate and the water unwholesome. I admitted the latter, but said that the Red Hills Lake contained six years' supply, and the only thing required is to extend the works to certain parts of the city, which the Municipality was doing. Both Sir Philip Hutchins and Sir Charles Turner said that we made a great mistake when we agitated against Mr. Justice Parker's appointment to the Council, and that the presence in the Council of a man who had had judicial training and experience would be a great advantage. Sir Philip Hutchins thinks that if a judicial man is in the Council, there would be no need for a fourth Member of the Council, there would be hardly a combination of two such Civilian Councillors, and when the Governor differs from them he might overrule them if necessary.

On Wednesday I again went to the India Office and spent more than three hours in taking notes.

Yesterday we had an important meeting of the British Congress Committee. We met at 11 in the morning and worked till 6-30 in the evening! Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Hume and Mr. Goodridge were the European members present; and all the Indian members were there. The chief business done was the drafting of an address of

congratulation to Her Majesty on the occasion of the Jubilee in the name of the Indian people. A copy of this address will probably be posted to the Secretary of the Mahajana Sabha this evening.

The address, besides congratulating Her Majesty, prays for a special boon on this auspicious occasion. It prays for four gifts. It wants a further expansion of the Legislative Councils, the enforcement of the House of Commons' Resolution regarding the simultaneous examination for the I.C.S., the introduction of permanent settlement, and the revival of the old practice of a periodical inquiry into Indian affairs. The address draws pointed attention to the fact that, while the United Kingdom and her Colonies are prosperous and are jubilant, India alone is unhappy and depressed, and some mark of the Queen's well-known loving care of her Indian fellow-subjects on this unique occasion, will be exceedingly gratifying to her loyal Indian subjects.

APPENDIX V

The following is the text of the speech by G. Subramania Iyer at *The Hindu* Silver Jubilee celebrations on September 21, 1903 :

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank the Hon'ble Mr. Ananda Charlu most sincerely for the complimentary terms in which he has mentioned my name and associated it with that of Mr. Veeraraghavachariar. This occasion to me is one of mingled feeling of regret and joy. I regret that I am no longer in the proud position of conducting the leading organ of the native community in Southern India, and no longer in that position which gave me opportunities and scope to render service, however humble, in the advancement of my country's cause. At the same time I rejoice that the little seed I along with others planted 25 years ago had germinated, grown and expanded into a tree which now I am so pleased to see commands the confidence and attachment of large sections of my countrymen. Perhaps it is not fully understood that in this country the functions and responsibilities of the Press are not the same that are associated with it in the Western countries; and this difference is accentuated under peculiar conditions of our country at the present day and more especially in the period which covers the origin and growth of *The Hindu*. Its more serious and more important function is to form public opinion, to educate public opinion, and to direct it along channels of public utility and public improvement; and this peculiarity of the task of the Indian Press was most particularly felt at the time when *The Hindu* was started.

The Hindu was started at a time when, in the natural

growth of the political conditions of the country, an era of public activity was inaugurated by a combination of various circumstances and it fell harmoniously into line with the spirit of the times; and the natural sympathy and co-operation that subsisted between both conduced to its marvellous success. It was the duty of *The Hindu* to create public opinion to reflect it, and then to derive support from it which then it was instrumental in forming. It had indeed its own difficulties and disappointments but the peculiar good fortune of *The Hindu* was that at no stage of its career did it fail to meet with the cordial and full support of the public; from individuals whom it necessarily offended in the course of the discharge of its duties of an unpleasant nature. Even those whom it had injured in their official career sympathised with us because we were able to convince them as well as the public that we worked and worked only in the interests of the community.

Interesting as the past career of *The Hindu* has been, its future is full of more serious difficulties and responsibilities. When I say *The Hindu,* I mention it only as a representative of the Indian Press as a whole. Hard has been the fight in which the Indian Press has been engaged till now during these 25 years, I may say, since Lord Lytton assumed the office of Viceroy and Governor-General. But the future of the Indian Press will be harder. Unfortunately the Press has to bear in this country the whole burden of public work, and the more public opinion is developed the more the need for the criticism of public measures is felt, the greater will be its responsibilities, and it is obvious that as public intelligence expands and as educated sections of the public grow in number and influence, the relations between the governors and the governed are bound to be less har-

more effective animadversions of the measures of the monious and there will be far more criticism and far Government than it has been the case till now. Ladies and Gentlemen, so long as the Government maintains its present attitude towards public opinion, of not giving it a recognised constitutional status and refuses to take the representatives of the people into its confidence, so long this unfortunate misunderstanding will remain. Once the difference between the public and the Government is bridged and a constitutional status is conferred on the people, then there is a chance of the Press becoming a support of the Government instead of its 'standing opposition' which it is sometimes said to be. Therefore, in regard to political matters the Press has a very serious future.

But not in regard to political matters alone. It has never been the policy of *The Hindu* at all events as long as I was the Editor of the paper, I never underrated the responsibility of the Press, in regard to our own social disabilities. When I had the editorial management of *The Hindu* or now when I am following other avenues of public opinion, I have been fully sensible of the responsibilities of the exponents of public opinion in this country to courageously and honestly press the importance of redressing our social wrongs as well as the errors of the Government. Therefore the Indian Press cannot shut its eyes to the insidious and pernicious influence of the spirit of reaction that seems to be passing at present over the country and be misguided by the delusions of a spurious patriotism. Let it not ignore the changed conditions under which the country is passing. Let us remember that no community that has survived a certain stage of its growth can go back and live it again any more than an old man can re-acquire and live again his childhood. The nation lives for the future and not so much for the past

although I do not ignore the historical continuity between the past and the future. The educated countrymen of mine who support the Press and other exponents of public opinion should bear this fact in their mind that the past is not so important as the present nor the present so important as the future. The community lives not so much for the past as for the future.

Therefore I pray and wish that *The Hindu* will not swerve from the policy it has always followed from its commencement and will advocate and champion progress not only in regard to our political conditions, but also along all lines of social and material advancement. Change, reform and progress constitute the life of a nation; whereas blind and thoughtless conservatism lead to stagnation and eventual ruin; and so long as the people fail to appreciate the value of the real critical nature of the country at present, so long will there be the danger of the forces of stagnation working in our midst. Thus the Press being the only exponent of public opinion in this country, it behoves us and its conductors to pay particular attention to this general aspect and functions and duties, as well as to its more restricted ones relating to its political advancement. I thank once more Mr. Ananda Charlu for the kind words in which he has connected my name with the paper.

APPENDIX VI

In a communication to *The Hindu* dated December 28, 1914, G. Subramania Iyer wrote :

Tomorrow Madras will win the unique distinction of establishing a statue representing the Marquis of Ripon, one of the most popular and sagacious Viceroys that India has had since she passed under the direct Government of the British Parliament. No other Indian city, neither Calcutta nor Bombay, has chosen to honour the Viceroy's name in this special manner, although he was not less admired or loved there than in Madras or other parts of India. For every other Governor-General of India Calcutta has erected a statue. Far lesser men, like Lieutenant-Governors and Commanders-in-Chief, have had the memory of their names perpetuated in this manner. Lord Ripon incurred the displeasure of the *Zemindars* of Bengal by his Tenancy Bill towards the close of his administration, in which he aimed at securing the rights of the tenants against encroachment by the *Zemindars*. This estranged the *Zemindars* who, by refraining from an attempt to effect a statue for a most deserving Viceroy, avenged an imagined injury to their own interests and refused to perform what was evidently their duty as wealthy representatives of the nation. In Bombay, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and a few others tried to establish a technical institute in Lord Ripon's name, but though a comparatively small institute was established, it was merged in a bigger and wider institute in the name of the late Queen Victoria. Thus the two premier cities of the Empire having failed to do their duty in grateful remembrance of a most honoured name, Madras

came to the rescue and resolved to erect a statue within its own boundaries and began to move the other cities of the Empire to join it in the discharge of this national duty. There was a small sum of money collected for this purpose in Calcutta and it was left in the hands of the late W. C. Bonnerjee. But owing to some legal difficulty in that sum being made available to Madras, and other cities not being willing or prompt in lending their co-operation, Madras after some hesitation as to the place where the statue was to be erected, made up its mind that the distinction must belong to itself and the statue must be erected in some prominent locality within its limits.

In the year 1903, when the Indian National Congress was held in Madras, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, the Hon'ble Nawab Sayed Mahammad Bahadur appealed to all Congressmen and to the Indian public to co-operate and bring about the fulfilment of this national obligation. From that year's Congress collections a sum of Rs. 5,000 was set apart for this purpose; and with the accumulating interest on it and with other public gifts a sum of Rs. 17,000 was available when the order for a statue was given to an English artist through our ever-willing friend Sir William Wedderburn. Tomorrow at 8 A.M. (29-12-1914) on one of the most frequented thoroughfares of Madras, on the Mount Road, near the Maharajah of Vizianagaram's fountain, will the opening ceremony be performed under the distinguished presidency of Lord Pentland, who as a prominent member of the Liberal Party, ought to be well acquainted with the Marquis of Ripon. The late Marquis was an old, respected and trusted member of the Liberal Party which he led in the House of Lords at the time of his death and to which, during his long public career, he had rendered valuable

service on many an occasion. We are sure Lord Pentland will have many words of appreciation and kindness to say about this nobleman who, in private as well as in public life, had created few enemies.

As for the service which the late Marquis of Ripon rendered to the Indian people we need not say much in this place. The close of his administration in 1884 saw the vindication of the just claims of the Indian people against the reaction and opposition of Anglo-Indians. The Statutory Indian Civil Service established at the time of his predecessor made a hole in the tight body of Anglo-Indian officialdom. And the spirit of Lord Ripon's administration having tended to widen this hole and make the entry of a larger number of Indians into the official service possible, the Anglo-Indian community became more irritated and started the unholy *Jehad* against the righteous administration of the Viceroy; though the Ilbert Bill agitation did not end quite satisfactorily to the people, still it had the inestimable advantage of rallying them towards a common object and creating among them a consciousness of their collective right and claims. Thus the Marquis of Ripon was the father, so to speak, of India's national consciousness. Of the many wise and benevolent measures he adopted towards the good of the Indian people, his renowned Resolution to establish a true system of Local self-government throughout India as the foundation of the future political life of the people must stand pre-eminent. He was the first British Indian statesman who admitted in public the necessity and wisdom of the political elevation of the people of this country as the result of the progressive policy of British rule. To make this elevation comparatively easy and productive of good results he, with rare sagacity, laid its foundation in a widespread system of local self-government which will train

the people in the responsible task of administering public affairs. If Lord Ripon had not done any other thing and had done only this, his name would still be worthy of our undying gratitude.

He retired at the end of the fourth year of his administration and several Indian deputations from different parts of the country waited on him in Bombay to bid him farewell. A deputation from the city of Madras and one from Salem also went to wait upon him—the deputation from Salem to thank Lord Ripon for his leniency in the treatment of the so-called rioters of Salem, as against the disposition of the Madras Government to be harsh in their treatment of them. Among those that went from Madras are still living : Dr. Sir S. Subramania Iyer, Mr. Theagaraja Chettiar, Mr. C. Ethirajulu Naidu and Mr. G. Subramania Iyer; and amongst those that went from Salem we could remember only the Hon'ble Mr. C. Vijiaraghavachariar. Those that were in Bombay at that time would never forget the immense crowds that thronged every street and thoroughfare of Bombay, the intense enthusiasm which was demonstrated in numerous ways and the elation of hope and spirit that characterised the educated classes as well as the masses of the people. Indeed, all along the way from Calcutta to Bombay the retiring Viceroy's progress was marked by popular enthusiasm which was so unique and great and which was so unprecedented that Sir Auckland Colvin, a reactionary bureaucrat, then Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces, in an article in *The Pioneer*, asked "If it be real, what does it mean?" and answered the question by stating that if it meant anything, it meant the recovery of a new consciousness by the Indian people which rendered necessary a modification in the old methods of British Indian administration.

The Madras deputation requested Lord Ripon to sit for a photo which request, he, with his wonted kindness, granted. The late Mr. R. Raghunatha Row who was one of the Madras deputationists, and whom Lord Ripon knew as the Dewan of Indore, asked the retiring Viceroy whether he could not stay another year and complete the term of his office; he replied "Well, Mr. Raghunatha Row, if I thought I could do any good to India by remaining another year I would gladly stay on." The Tory Government had just obtained power and the curtain was dropped on a most useful and benevolent chapter of British administration. That after his retirement, his interest in the welfare of India continued unabated to the end of his life is shown by the fact that Lord Morley had the benefit of consultation with Lord Ripon, in the various reforms recently introduced in India and that Lord Morley in his despatch to the Viceroy on decentralization quoted from Lord Ripon's memorable resolution on local self-government. That we, amidst the scramble, so to say of memorials in behalf of less worthy men, should have tarried so long to pay proper heed to the superior claims for such recognition on the part of Lord Ripon, is indeed a matter for regret, especially in view of the fact that if a few years earlier, the memorial would not have worn the complexion as it does at present, of a posthumous honour and would have tended to gladden the aged heart of that righteous nobleman who lived beyond the allotted "three score years and ten."

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